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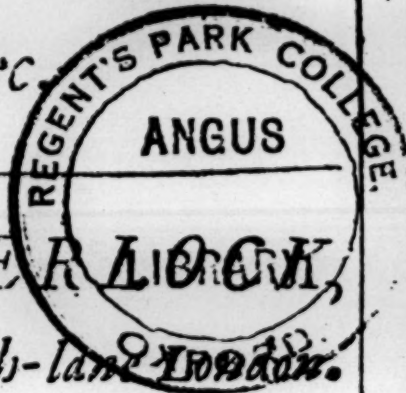
And Our

Union and Communion

With Him, &c.

By *WILLIAM SHERLOCK*

Rector of St. George Buttolph-lane London.



The Second Edition Corrected.

L O N D O N :

Printed by *Andrew Clark* for *Walter Kettilby*, at
the *Bishops-Head* in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*.

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THE P R E F A C E.

Christian Reader,

I Am conscious to my self of so honest a Design in writing this Discourse, that I am very well armed against those various Censures which are the usual Reward of such Attempts ; for there is no such Sanctuary against the rudest Clamors and the most unjust Reproaches, as a good Conscience. I was heartily grieved to see so many well-disposed Persons abused with Words and Phrases, which either signifie nothing, or have a very ambiguous and doubtful, or a very bad sence ; when I have observed that great Zeal which some men

The Preface.

have for the Worship of God, I have often thought what great Instruments they might be of Gods Glory, were their Zeal directed and governed with Knowledge and Judgment; and when I have observed how innocently and vertuously some of those men live, who have espoused such Principles as naturally tend to make them bad, I have thought what excellent Persons they might prove, did they rightly understand so excellent a Religion, as is published to the World in the Gospel of Christ; such thoughts as these at first engaged me in this Work, to rectifie those mistakes which will either make men bad, or hinder and retard their progress in true Goodness, which is so pious and charitable a design, as may at least plead my excuse, though it should appear to be a Mistaken Zeal.

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The Preface.

In the management of this Discourse, I have carefully avoided all Personal Reflexions, have not meddled with the Lives and Actions of Men, which I am so charitable as to hope, may be more Orthodox than their Judgments: I have represented their Opinions in their own Words, and am not conscious to my self, that I have put any other sense upon their Words, than they intended; and I cannot see what reason any man hath to take it ill, that I repeat that, which he himself thought fit to publish: where they pretend to argue gravely, I have examined their Arguments with all possible gravity and solemnity; where they plainly toy and trifle, I have so far complied with their humour, as to smile sometimes, though as modestly as any man can desire: I have taken care, not only to unteach men what was amiss, but to explain and confirm

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the true notions of Religion, lest any man should suspect, that under a pretence of rectifying mistakes I designed to expose all Religion. What men will account severe, I cannot tell, because the gentlest Arguments will appear severe to any man, who is pinch'd by them; but I have given no hard words, and have sometimes called things by softer names than they deserve, on purpose to avoid the imputation of severity, which is now the common artifice to teach men to despise and reproach what they cannot answer: and if after all this, I cannot escape without some hard names and hard censures, I must be contented with my portion; and indeed no man ought to expect better usage, who considers, that Mr. Baxter himself, who hath deserved so well for his Pious Labours, could not escape, when he touch'd upon their Darling Notions.

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The Preface.

And now, Christian Reader, I shall beg no more of thee, than to read this Discourse with an honest and unprejudiced mind, and as I did not compose it without imploring the Guidance and Direction of God, so I recommend it to thee with my hearty prayers, that it may prove as useful, as my intentions were honest and charitable.

Farewel.

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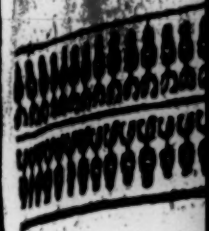
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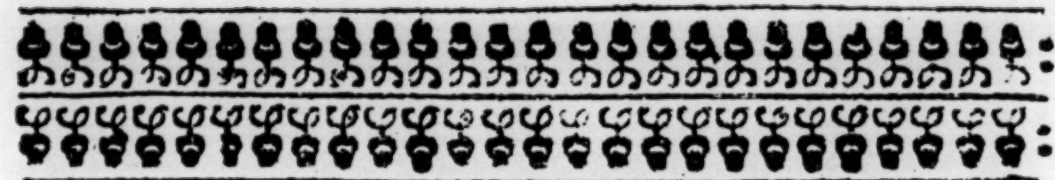
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THE INTRODUCTION.

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ALL Error hath some appearance of Truth, it being impossible to believe a plain and undisguised Falshood: but yet most men are so easie and credulous, so impatient of severe Inquiries, or byassed by so many corrupt Passions and Interests, that they are too often imposed on by very slight Appearances: And commonly the first and fundamental Mistake, is in a confusion of Names, in a doubtful and ambiguous use of Words, especially in matters of Religion, which depend upon Revelation, and must be judged by the Publick and Authentick Records of Inspired Men: for it happens too often in this case, that men consider nothing but the Sound of Words, and from thence form such uncouth *Ideas* of Religion, as

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are fitted to the meanness of their Understandings, or gratifie their natural Genius and Disposition, or are calculated to serve an Interest. And thus the Gospel of our Saviour is defaced and obscured by affected Mysteries, and Paradoxes, and senseless Propositions; and Christ Himself, who was the Brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express Image of his Person, who in the most plain and perspicuous manner declared the Will of God to us, is represented with a thicker Vail upon his Face than *Moses*; and the Glory of the Second Covenant is much more obscured with a Mist of Words, than the First was with Types and Figures.

This will appear to any man, who shall observe what strange Interpretations are commonly made of those Texts of Scripture, especially in *St. Paul's* Epistles, wherein Christ is mentioned; what absurd Propositions are built on them, what pernicious Consequences drawn from them, to defeat the great Ends of Christs appearing in the Flesh.

I always took it for granted, that Christ and his Religion were very well agreed; but, if we believe some men, there is as irreconcilable a difference between the Religion of *Christs Person*, and of his *Gospel*, as between the *Law* and *Grace*: For the *Gospel* of Christ is as severe a Dispensation as the *Law*, which dooms all men to Eternal Misery, who live not very innocent and vertuous Lives; but the Person of Christ (as these men represent it) is all Grace, a meer Refuge and Sanctuary for the Wicked and Ungodly.

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not at odds with his *Gospel*; and that the Person of Christ will save none whom his Gospel condemns; or if Christ would save those whom his Gospel condemns, *viz.* impenitent and incorrigible Sinners, I cannot imagine how men should know this without a particular Revelation, and I hope, they do not mean this by the private Testimony of the Spirit to work assurance in them; And yet we can think of no other way, since the Gospel is so silent in this matter: But it is easie to observe, where the mistake lies: for some men, where-ever they meet with the word *Christ* in Scripture, always understand by it *the Person of Christ*, and thus *Faith in Christ*, and *Hope in Christ*, and the like Phrases, are expounded of *a fiducial reliance and recumbency on the Person of Christ for Salvation*, in contra-distinction to obedience to his Laws, which sets up a *Religion of the Person of Christ*, in opposition to the *Religion of his Gospel*. And therefore the best way of rectifying this mistake, which sets the Person and the Gospel of Christ at such odds, is to examine the various significations of this Name *Christ* in Scripture, which shall serve as an Introduction to what follows.

And first *Christ* is originally the Name of an Office; which the Jews call the *Messias*. or one anointed by God: for under the Law, their Prophets, Priests, and Kings, were invested in their several Offices by the Ceremony of anointing them with Oil, which was typical of that Divine Unction which the Holy Jesus received at his Baptism, when the Spirit of God descended on him like a Dove. All those legal Unctions were ac-

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complisht in *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom God *anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with Power*, Acts x. 38. which was his Consecration to the Mediatorial Function, and virtually contained all those Offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, which are not properly distinct Offices in Christ, but the several parts and different Administrations of his Mediatorial Kingdom.

His Preaching the Gospel (which we commonly call his Prophetical Office) was the exercise of his Regal Power and Authority, in publishing his Laws, and the Conditions of Eternal Life. Hence the Gospel is so often called the Kingdom of Heaven, and our Saviour tells *Pilate*, that he was born to be a King, and the principal exercise of his Kingly Power in this World consists *in bearing witness to the Truth*, John xviii. 37. that is, it was an Act of his Regal Power to conquer Error and Ignorance, to destroy the Kingdom of Darkness by the brightness of his Appearing, and to erect his Throne in the Hearts and Consciences of Men, by the Power and Evidence of Truth, which is a true spiritual Kingdom.

And he was a Kingly Priest, a Priest after the Order of *Melchizedeck*, who was King of *Salem*, (the New *Jerusalem* which comes down from Heaven) and Priest of the most high God, *Hebr. vii. 1.* When he offered himself a Sacrifice for Sin, he acted like a King. *No man took his Life from him, but he had power to lay it down, and he had power to take it again*, St. John x. 18. Herein he differ'd from other Kings, that he laid the Foundation of his Kingdom in his own Blood; purchas'd

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And that, to which we commonly appropriate the Name of Regal Power, that Authority he is invested with, to Govern his Church, to send his Spirit, to forgive Sins, to dispence his Grace, and supernatural Assistances, to answer Prayers, to raise the Dead, and judge the World, and bestow Immortal Life on all his sincere Disciples; all this is the Reward of his Death and Sufferings, and is therefore called his Intercession, because like the Intercession of the High Priest under the Law, it is founded on his Expiation and Sacrifice. *With his own Blood he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us, Hebr. ix. 12.* So that *Intercession* signifies the Administration of his Mediatory Kingdom: the Power of a Regal Priest, to expiate and forgive Sins.

This is a true account of the Nature of Christs Kingdom, and the Method whereby it is erected. He first conquers the Minds of Men by the power of his Word and Spirit; and reduces them into subjection to God; and then he pardons their Sins, and raiseth them into an immortal Life by the expiation of his Sacrifice, and that Power and Authority which is founded on it.

And this is the Interpretation of the Name *Christ*, which signifies a *Mediatory King*, immediately appointed by God to that Office, and consecrated to it by a Divine and Supernatural Unction. And thus the Name *Christ* signifies in those places of Scripture, where *Jesus* is said to be the *Christ*, i. e. that *Messias*, whom God promised to

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Secondly, Though Christ is originally the name of an Office, yet it is used in Scripture to signify the Person who is invested with this Office: for the use of Names being for distinction, and the Office of a Mediator, which is the first signification of the Name Christ, being appropriate to Him, it might well serve for a proper name, when once it was known who was *the Christ*; and therefore though before his designation to this Office was publicly owned, he was onely called *Jesus*, the Name given him by the Angel, before he was born; yet, when by his Resurrection from the Dead, He was declared with power to be the Son and the *Christ* of God, *Christ* became as much his proper Name, as *Jesus* was before. In the Gospels, which contain the History of his Life and Death, He is always called *Jesus*, because all this time it was disputed, whether he were the *Christ* or not; but in the Epistles which are directed to the Christian Churches, which were founded on this Faith, That *Jesus* is the *Christ*, he is as familiarly called *Christ*, as *Jesus*; and often-times by both, *Jesus Christ*. For there can be no mistake in the Person, by what Name soever he be called, whether it belong to his Office, or Nature, or circumstances of his Life and Fortune, if there be but *One*, to whom that Name belongs.

Thirdly, *Christ* signifies the Gospel, and Religion of Christ; as *Moses* signifies the Writings and Laws of *Moses*; and the *Prophets*, the Writings or Sermons of the Prophets: St. Luke xvi. 29. *They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them;* and

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and Vers. 31. *If they bear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rise from the dead.* And there is nothing more usual in common speech, than to call any Laws, or Religion, or Philosophy, by the name of the first Authors. Thus Gal. vi. 15. *In Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a new Creature:* that is, in the Gospel and Religion of Christ, nothing is of any value to recommend us to the favour of God, but a new Nature, a holy and vertuous Life: The Law prefer'd Circumcision before Uncircumcision, but the Gospel of Christ makes no such distinction; but instead of those external signs requires the inward Purity of Heart. Thus Col. ii. 8. *Beware lest men spoil you through Philosophy and vain deceit, after the Traditions of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ:* Where after Christ is opposed to the Traditions of Men, and the Rudiments of the World, and therefore must signifie not the Person, but the Religion or Gospel of Christ; i. e. Have a care, lest you be corrupted with the foolish Opinions and Superstitions of Men, which are inconsistent with the Christian Philosophy, and a plain Contradiction to the Doctrine and Religion of Christ. And in Vers. 6. *As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him; i. e. obey the Doctrine of Christ, as you have been taught it by us; for so in the next Verse he calls it, Being established in the Faith, as you have been taught.* The like we may see in Ephes. iv. 20, 21. *But you have not so learned Christ, if so be you have heard him, and been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.* Now what

can *learning Christ* signifie, but learning the Gospel of Christ? And how could the *Ephesians*, who never saw Christ in the flesh, be said to *hear him*, in any other sense, than as they heard his Gospel preach'd to them, *Vers. 8.* and to be *instructed in him, as the truth is in Jesus*, (for so ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε signifies, not, as our Translators render it, being taught by him, but instructed in him) must be expounded of his Religion in its genuine and primitive simplicity, so as Christ taught it his Disciples, without the mixture of such corrupt and impure Doctrines as the Gnostick Hereticks had taught under the Name of Christianity. These I take to be very convincing Allegations of the use of the Name Christ, for his Doctrine and Religion.

Fourthly, It is acknowledg'd by all, that *Christ* sometimes signifies the *Church of Christ*, which is *his Body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*: And thus we must understand those Phrases of being *in Christ*, *engrafted into Christ*, and *united to Christ*; which signifie no more than to be a Christian, One, who belongs to that Society, whereof Christ is the Head and Governour: Thus it is used in *Rom. xii. 5.* *We being many are One Body in Christ*; i. e. we are all but one Christian Society, which is the One Body of Christ. Thus, *Brethren in Christ*, i. e. Christian Brethren, *Col. i. 2.* And, *if any man be in Christ, he is a new Creature*, *2 Cor. v. 17.* i. e. every sincere Christian is a New Creature; or, whoever professeth the Faith of Christ, and lives in Society with the Christian Church, hath obliged himself to live a new Life: But of this more in its proper place.

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Thus variously is the Name *Christ* used in the Writings of the Apostles, which hath occasioned very great Mistakes in some Mens Divinity, who are very zealous to advance Christs *Person*, to the Prejudice and Reproach of his *Religion*. Who, instead of those substantial Duties of the love of God, and Men, and an Universal Holiness of Life, have introduced a fanciful *application* of Christ to our selves, and *Union* to him, set off with all those choice Phrases of *closing with Christ, and embracing Christ, and getting into Christ, and getting an interest in Christ, and trusting, and relying, and rowling our Souls on Christ*: And instead of Obedience to the Gospel, and the Laws of Christ, have advanced a kind of Amorous and Enthusiastick Devotion, which consists in a Passionate Love to the Person of Christ, in admiring his *Personal Excellencies and Perfections, Fulness, Beauty, Loveliness, Riches, &c.* The Foundation of all which Riddles and Mysteries, is, That these Men make the Person of Christ almost the sole Object of the Christian Religion; and whatever is spoken of Christ, with respect to his Offices, his Laws, and his Religion, they understand of his Person, and Personal Excellencies. And therefore the design of this Discourse is to reconcile the *Person* of Christ with his *Religion*, that Men may not abuse themselves with a pretended Devotion to our Saviour, while they contemn his Laws, and purposely defeat the great End of his coming into the world. And to that end I shall discourse on these following arguments.

First, Of what Use the consideration of Christs Person is, in the Christian Religion; Secondly, What

Of what Use the Consideration of Christs

What the Knowledge of Christ is ; Thirdly, Wherein our Union to Christ, and Communion with him consists ; Fourthly, Christs Love to us, and our Love to Christ.

CHAP. II.

Of what Use the Consideration of Christs Person is, in the Christian Religion.

THe first thing to be stated is, Of what Use the consideration of Christs *Person* is, in the Christian Religion : For those men, who talk so much of the *Person*, and *Personal Excellencies* of Christ, frequently without any sense, and generally without any just ground from Reason or Scripture, are very clamorous, and alarm the World with strange Jealousies and Fears ; as if there were a party of men started up, who design to make *Christ useless*, and to reduce Religion to its first Natural State, which knew no Priest, nor Sacrifice, nor Mediator. A design, which, I profess, I am wholly a Stranger to, as I believe all those are, who are so much charged with it ; The Foundation of *my Hope* is that, which is the Foundation of the *Christian Religion*, the *Sacrifice and Intercession* of our Lord Jesus Christ. But I doubt not, it will appear in the Sequel, what the ground of these calumnies are, *viz.* That *we are charged with making Christ useless, onely because we dare not make his Laws and Religion so* : And to prevent

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prevent such scandals for the future, I shall lay the Foundation of all in this Inquiry: Of what Use the consideration of Christs Person is, in the Christian Religion.

By the *Person of Christ* I mean, what all men ought to mean, who talk of Christs Person, viz. *Christ himself*, as every mans Person is himself: and the only proper consideration here, is the greatness of his *Person*, who is the Θεάνθρωπος, or *God-Man*, the Son of *God*, in whom his Soul was well pleased, who left the Glories of an Eternal Throne, to undertake the Work of Mans Redemption, and this suggests many useful considerations, which have a great influence upon Religion.

As first, This is a plain Demonstration of Gods Love to Mankind, that he sent so *Great*, and so *Dear* a Person, as his onely begotten Son, into the World to save Sinners. All Religion is founded on a belief of Gods Goodness, *He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb.xi.6. that is, must believe his Being and his Providence, that he loves, and takes care of good men; for no man will serve God, who does not hope to be the better by it. And therefore every Religion had its proper Demonstrations of Gods Goodness. *Natural Religion* was founded on those Natural Evidences of the Divine Bounty and Goodness, in Making and Governing the World; the *Mosaick Religion* on those Miraculous Deliverances which God wrought for *Israel*, and that particular Providence which watched over them: The *Christian Religion*, on the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection

Of what Use the consideration of Christs

urrection of the Son of God ; a Work of such stupendious love, that it is the Wonder of Angels, and the Astonishment as well as Praise of Men. No man can doubt of Gods good will to Sinners, who sees the Son of God cloathed with our Flesh, and dying as a Sacrifice for our Sins, this gives Relief to our guilty Fears, and does encourage us to retrieve our past Follies by new Obedience, that we have so great an assurance of Gods goodness ; for he had nothing greater to bestow on us, than his Son ; *And he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?* Rom. viii. 32.

Secondly, This gives great Reverence and Authority to the Gospel, that it was preached by so great a Person as the Son of God. Laws always partake of the fate and condition of the Law-giver ; the greater opinion we have of his Wisdom, and Reverence for his Person, the more sacred regard have we for his Laws ; and therefore *Numa* pretended, that he received his Laws from the Goddess *Ægeria*, to procure a greater Veneration for them : Thus God, *who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past to the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed Heir of all things, by whom also he made the Worlds,* Hebr. i. 1, 2. And his Greatness and Authority gives an inviolable Sanction and just Reverence to his Laws. *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip ; for if the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and* disobe-

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Thirdly, The great Authority to his Law, our Prophet and our Precepts and his Life Great Persons, and was the Brightness of his express Image of his Person, and cures the Honour and gives us an evident Perfection of our Nature to the perfection of our way to be perfect in the Greatness of his Person of his Love and wonderful. That the Law when he was become poor, that Law should become the Lord of Life and These are such Examples as we can never be so great as fully convince us of our sinfulness to the measure we can never flourish, when he came up his Lodging in Fourthly, The of his Sacrifice, &

disobedience received a just Recompence of Reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, Heb. ii. 1, 2, 3. To the same purpose is that Parable in Luke xx. 9, &c.

Thirdly, The greatness of his Person gives great Authority to his Example: He came to be our Prophet and our Guide, to teach us by his Precepts and his Life: Now we love to imitate Great Persons, and none is so Great as He, who was the Brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express Image of his Person: His Example secures the Honour and Reputation of Vertue, and gives us an evident Demonstration wherein the Perfection of our Nature consists; for he lived up to the perfection of Humane Nature, and the only way to be perfect, is to live as he lived. Nay the Greatness of his Person makes all the Expressions of his Love and Goodness the more wonderful. That the Son of God should become man, that when he was rich, for our sakes he should become poor, that the Great Lord of the Creation should become a Minister and Servant, that the Lord of Life and Glory should suffer and die: These are such Expressions of Love and Goodness as we can never fully imitate, because we can never be so great as he was; but yet they powerfully convince us, how reasonable it is for us to stoop to the meanest Offices of Kindness, since we can never stoop so low, as the Son of God did, when he came down from Heaven, and took up his Lodging in the Grave.

Fourthly, This assures us of the infinite value of his Sacrifice, and the power of his Intercession: He

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He was a Priest of a higher Order than that of *Aaron*, and his Sacrifice of a greater value than the Blood of Bulls and Goats : God cannot but be pleased, when his own Son undertakes to be a Ransome, and to make Atonement for Sinners, which is so great a Vindication of Gods Dominion and Sovereignty, of the Authority of his Laws, and the Wisdom and Justice of his Providence, that he may securely pardon humble and penitent Sinners, without reproaching any of his Attributes. And we can reasonably desire no greater security for the performance of this Gospel Covenant, than that it was sealed with the Blood of the Son of God, which is such a confirmation of God's Covenant and Promise, as the World never had before ; Christ is the Surety of a better Testament, *Heb. vii. 22.* ἑὐς, one who undertakes for the performance of it, and the security he gives us depends on the virtue of his Priesthood and Sacrifice, and on the power of his Intercession ; for so in *Vers. 21.* the Apostle tells us, that God had confirmed the Priesthood of Christ by Oath, *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the Order of Melchisedec* : And whereas other Priests died, and left their Priesthood to their Successors, *He continueth for ever, and therefore hath an unchangeable Priesthood, and is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them, Vers. 23, 24, 25.* And who can desire a more powerful Mediator than the Son of God, to whom God hath given such signal Demonstrations of his Favour and Acceptance, by a Voice from Heaven, and by the Glo-

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And that the virtue of Christs Sacrifice and Intercession depends very much on the Greatness of his Person, is plain from the Epistle to the *Hebrews*; the design of which is to show how much the Priesthood and Sacrifice of Christ excels that of the Law, and the Foundation of all is laid in the first Chapter, where the Apostle discourses of his Greatness and Excellency, that he was the Brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express Image of his Person; the Heir of all things, by whom he made the Worlds, exalted above all Angels, who hath an everlasting Throne and Scepter, and shall continue, when all other things moulder and vanish away.

But Fifthly, The Person of Christ is of no other consideration in the Christian Religion, than as it hath an influence upon the great ends of his Undertaking, *i. e.* we must expect no more from Christ upon account of his Personal Excellencies and Perfections, than what he hath promised in his Gospel: He hath told us there, whatever he intends to do for us, and hath charged us to expect no more from him. *Matth. vii. 21.* Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father, which is in Heaven. That is, you must not expect that I will be better to you than my word, & receive you into the Kingdom of Heaven upon easier terms than I have promised; I shall be moved with none of your flattering speeches, but how good and kind soever you may fancy me, unless you obey those Laws I publish in my Fathers

thers Name, I declare before-hand, that I will disown you, when I come to Judgment.

For indeed should Christ absolve and justify those men, whom the Gospel condemns, that is, wilful and incorrigible Sinners, this were to disannul that Covenant, which he had sealed with his Blood: Christ is the Object of our Faith and Hope, onely as he is our Saviour; and he is our Saviour in no other sense, than as he is our Mediator; and he mediates for us as our Priest, that is, in virtue of that Covenant, which he hath sealed with his Blood: And therefore we have no reason to expect any thing from the Person of Christ, which is not contained in his Covenant, much less any thing which contradicts it; for that would be in effect to *renounce his Mediation, and to trust to the Goodness of his Nature.* And let any man judge whether this be not to set up a New Religion, which hath no Covenant, and no Promise; for whatever we can expect from Christ by virtue of a Promise, is contained in the Gospel, and if we expect any thing else from him upon his Personal Account, it is without a Promise: which at best reduces us to the same state in which the World was, before God had made an expresse Revelation of his Will, when all their Hopes were founded on that Natural Perswasion they had of the Divine Goodness, on that Faith which is the Foundation of *Natural Religion, that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. xi. 6.* Thus these Men trust in the Person of Christ without any Promise, nay (which makes the case much worse) in contradiction to the terms of that Covenant, which he sealed

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This is so very absurd at first sight, that I know no man will be so senseless as to own it *in so many words*, nor do I charge any man with it ; but I say, this is the natural interpretation of *trusting in the Person of Christ, in his Blood, and Merits, and Satisfaction, Fulness, and All-sufficiency, and of relying and rowling the Soul on Christ for Salvation*, and the like Phrases of a late date, in which some men place the whole Mystery of the Gospel ; if they understand any thing more by them, than expecting to be saved according to the terms of the Gospel-Covenant ; that is, by believing and obeying the Gospel of Christ : And certainly they must mean something more than this, or else they raise a great noise and clamour in the World, and confound mens minds with obscure and unscriptural phrases to no purpose : as will appear more in what follows.

CHAP. III.

Of the Knowledge of Christ.

SECT. I.

THE Happiness of Mankind consists in the Knowledge and Love of God, who is the greatest and the best Being ; and therefore our good God, who is never wanting to his own
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Glory, and the Happiness of his Creatures, hath taken care in all Ages by one means or other to make known himself and his Will to the World.

In the first Creation of all things he left such visible Impresses of his own Divine Wisdom and Power on the Works of Nature, and planted in the Mind of Man such a Natural Knowledge of himself, that it was as easie to discover the first Author of all things, as it is now for a well-disposed Eye to see the Sun when it shines; And while Man preserved his Innocence, God himself did not disdain to converse with him, and to give him very present and sensible Demonstrations of his Power and Providence.

In after Ages, as Mankind grew more corrupt, and declined to Idolatry, God afforded good men the frequent Apparitions of Angels, who were the great Ministers of his Providence; and to instruct the more degenerate part of Mankind, he raised up some great Examples and Preachers of Righteousness, such as *Enoch*, and *Noah*, and *Abraham*; and gave such plain and undeniable Proofs of his Acceptance of these Men, as might reasonably encourage others to imitate their Examples. He translated *Enoch* immediately to Heaven, and preserved *Noah* and his Family in the Ark, when he destroyed the rest of the World by a Deluge of Waters, which was a signal Warning to that corrupt Generation, while the Ark was preparing, and a great Example to Posterity; he sent *Lot* out of the Ruines of *Sodom*, and made *Abraham* the Father of a great Nation, which was a convincing Argument how dear these Good Men were to God, and what others

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others might expect from him, who would worship and fear him, as they did.

But when the World would not be reformed by these single Examples, God chose the Posterity of *Abraham* to be a publick and constant Demonstration of his Power and Providence, and care of good men. For when God chose the Posterity of *Abraham* to be his peculiar People, he did not design to exclude the rest of the World from his Care and Providence, and all possible means of Salvation, as the Apostle argues in *Rom. iii. 29.* *Is he the God of the Jews onely? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:* Which Argument, if it have any force in it, must prove Gods respect to the Gentiles before the preaching of the Gospel, as well as since, because it is founded on that Natural Relation which God owns to all Mankind, as their merciful Creator and Governour, which gives the Gentiles as well as Jews an Interest in his Care and Providence. This plainly evinces, that all those particular Favours which God bestowed on *Israel*, were not owing to any partial Fondness and Respect to that People, but the design of all was to encourage the whole World to worship the God of *Israel*, who gave so many Demonstrations of his Power and Providence. For this reason God brought *Israel* out of *Egypt*, with great Signs and Wonders, and a mighty Hand, (when he could have done it with less Noise and Observation) that he might the more gloriously triumph over the numerous Gods of *Egypt*, and all their Enchantments and Divinations, and that he might be honoured on *Pharaoh* and all his Host. For this

reason he maintained them in the Wilderness at the constant Expence of Miracles, fought all their Battels for them, and many times by weak and contemptible means overthrew great and puissant Armies, drove out the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, and gave them possession of that good Land. I say one great and principal design of all this was to convince the World of the Majesty and Power of the God of *Israel*, that they might renounce their foolish Idolatries and Country Gods, and consent in the worship of that One God who alone doth wondrous things; this account the Psalmist gives of it, that God wrought such visible and miraculous Deliverances for *Israel*, to make his Glory and his Power known among the Heathen; *The Lord hath made known his Salvation, his Righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the Heathen*, Psal. xcvi. 2. *That the Heathen might fear the Name of the Lord, and all the Kings of the Earth his Glory*, i.e. that all Nations might worship God, and all Kings submit their Crowns and Scepters to him, Psal. cii. 5. that by this means they might be instructed in that important Truth, *That the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised, that he is to be feared above all Gods; for all the Gods of the Nations are Idols, but he made the Heavens*, Psal. xcvi. 4, 5.

And as God set up the People of *Israel* as a visible demonstration to all the World of his Power and Providence, so he committed his Laws and Oracles to them, from whence the rest of the World, when they pleased, might fetch the best Rules of Life, and the most certain Notices of the Divine Will.

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In such ways God instructed the World in former Ages, by the Light of Nature, and the Examples of good Men, and the Sermons of the Prophets, and the Publick Example of a whole Nation, which God chose for that very purpose.

But when long and sad experience had proved all these ways ineffectual to reform the World, at last God sent his own Son into the World, to make a full and perfect Declaration of his Will, to give the best Rules of Life, and to encourage our Obedience by the most express Promises of a blessed Immortality. This was one great design of Christs appearing in the World, to reveal and declare God to us: *John i. 18. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him: and in Matth. xi. 27. All things are delivered unto me of my Father; no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he, to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* That is, God hath now committed unto Christ all the secret purposes of his Counsel concerning the Salvation of Mankind, which were concealed from Ages. None of the Prophets, which lived before, did so fully understand it, nor have we any other certain way of knowing this, but by the Revelation, which Christ hath made to us.

Thus in *John xiv. 6, 7. Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me; if you had known me, you should have known my Father also, and henceforth you have known him, and have seen him.* That is, I alone declare the true way to Life and Happiness, and no man can thoroughly understand the

Of the Knowledge of Christ.

Will of God, but by learning of me, and therefore whoever knows me, *i. e.* whoever is acquainted with the Doctrine and Religion I preach, knows my Father also, that is, is throughly instructed in Gods mind and will, as he proves in the following Verses. So that *to know God*, is to understand the will of God concerning the Salvation of Mankind, and *to know Christ*, is to understand that Declaration he hath made of Gods will to the World, *i. e.* the Gospel, which he preached, which is therefore called, *The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. That is, that glorious manifestation, which God hath made of himself to the World by Christ: for the *face of Christ*, signifies all that, whereby he made himself known, as a man is known by his face, that is, his Laws, and Religion and Miracles, whereby it appeared, that he was the Son of God, the great Prophet and Saviour of the World; by all this, the glory of God was manifested; in which the Apostle alludes to that shining glory, which appeared on the face of *Moses*, when he came down from the Mount; which was but typical of that bright and glorious manifestation, God would make of himself by Christ. God was seen in Christ, *he that hath seen me, hath seen my Father*; that is in plain words, the will of God was fully declared to the World by Christ: upon which account too (as well as with respect to his Divine Nature) he is called the *Brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express Image of his Person*, Heb. i. 1. These Discoveries Christ hath made of God, being a bright and glorious Reflexion of the Nature and Attributes

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butes of God, of his Eternal Wisdom, and Truth, and Holines, as true a Representation of the Divine Nature and Will, as any Picture is of the Person it represents. It is plain, that in this sense Christ is called the Image of God 2 Cor iv.4. *Let the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, which is the Image of God, should shine unto them.* Where Christs being the Image of God comes in very abruptly, unless we understand it in this sense, that he is the Image of God with respect to the glorious Revelations of the Gospel, which contain a true and faithful account of Gods Nature and Will.

The result of all is this, That God is the last and highest Object of religious and saving Knowledge, i. e. that the onely Knowledge necessary to the purposes of Religion, is such a Knowledge of Gods Nature and Will, as is sufficient to direct our Actions, and to encourage our Obedience: and whereas God was formerly known by the Light of Nature, and by the Works of Creation and Providence, and by those partial and occasional Revelations of his Will, which he made to the World; now the onely true medium of knowing God, is the Knowledge of Christ, who came into the World to declare God to us.

He knows God best, who is best acquainted with those Revelations which Christ hath made of God's will, i. e. who understands the Gospel in its full extent and latitude. This is the meaning of that expression in John xvii. 3. *This is Life Eternal, that they might know thee the onely true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,* i. e. the onely way to Eternal Life is to know the Nature and Will of God, and the only certain way

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of attaining to the knowledge of God ; is by knowing Christ, whom God sent into the World to publish the Everlasting Gospel, who hath made more perfect Revelations of Gods Will, than ever the World had before , and who alone hath brought Life and Immortality to light ; so that to know Christ, is not meerly to know his Person, which we can have no other knowledge of, than what he hath been pleased to reveal to us, but to be acquainted with the whole Doctrine of the Gospel in its native simplicity, as he published it to the World, which I observed before. The Apostle calls this, *learning Christ*, and being instructed in him, *as the truth is in Jesus*. For when we speak of the Knowledge of Christ, we must consider him as our Prophet, and so to know Christ, signifies to know his Gospel ; and to preach Christ, is to preach his Gospel, to expound all those Rules of Life, and Articles of Faith, which are contained in it ; whether they concern the Nature of God, or a future State, or his own Nature, and Office, and Mediation. Thus *Philip* preached Christ to the *Samaritans*, Acts viii. 5. which in *Vers. 12.* is called, *Preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ*. That is, the whole Doctrine of the Gospel.

This should make all considering men ashamed of those unreasonable and groundless clamours, that Christ is not preached, unless he be named in every sentence, whether the argument require it or not ; as if *preaching Christ* were to be understood in a literal sense of preaching nothing, but *the Name of Christ* : those preach Christ most, who

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who are careful to confirm men in the belief of the Gospel, and of that great Promise of Immortal Life, who expound his Laws, and the true nature and design of his Mediation; for every part of the Gospel is part of the Knowledge of Christ, and his Laws as Principal a part as any; because the design of the whole Gospel is to make us obedient to these Eternal Rules of Righteousness, whereby we are transformed into the Nature and Image of God, and are qualified for the Happiness of Heaven.

There is indeed a larger notion of the Knowledge of God and Christ, which includes the virtue and efficacy of this Knowledge: for the design of all Religious Knowledge being the Government of our Lives and Actions, how true soever our Speculations are, the Scripture brands all those as ignorant of God, who do not love, and reverence, and obey him: and though we be acquainted with the whole Doctrine of the Gospel, unless we heartily believe it, and obey all those Revelations which Christ hath made, we know him not: 1 John ii 3. *Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments: And Vers. 4. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him: And 1 John iii. 6. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not, whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* Not but that bad men may have as true a speculative Knowledge of the Nature and design of the Gospel, as good men have; but the meaning is, that this is a Knowledge which serves no end, which wants Life and Sense, and makes men no better, than if they were perfectly

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SECT. II.

Of Acquaintance with the Person of Christ.

After this plain account wherein the Knowledge of Christ consists, the sum of which is, that to know Christ is to understand his Gospel, which contains all those Revelations he made of Gods will, it will be necessary to examine another notion of the knowledge of Christ, very distinct from this, which contains a greater Secret, than at first one would imagine ; and that is, an *Acquaintance with the Person of Christ*, which if we will believe some men, is the only Fountain of saving Knowledge.

I shall not envy the Author the glory of this discovery, and therefore shall honestly confess where I had it, viz. In a Book entitled, *Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each Person distinctly*: Written by John Owen, D. D. And that I may not do this Author wrong, I must tell you what he means by *Acquaintance with Christs Person*, an account of which we have in *Digression 2. pag. 87. Of the Excellency of Christ Jesus*. Where he tells us, that *Christ is not onely the Wisdom of God, but made Wisdom to us, not only by teaching us Wisdom, (that is, by the Doctrines* he

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Of Acquaintance with the Person of Christ.

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he preached, and those Revelations he hath made of Gods will) *as he is the great Prophet of the Church, but also because by the knowing of him, we become acquainted with the Wisdom of God, which is our Wisdom.* To which purpose he applies that Text, which speaks of the Doctrines and Revelations of Christ, to his Person, Col. ii. 3. *For in him dwell all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.* So that our Acquaintance with Christs Person, in this Mans Divinity, signifies such a knowledge of what Christ is, hath done, and suffered for us, from whence we may learn those greater, deeper, and more saving Mysteries of the Gospel, which Christ hath not expressly revealed to us: for so he adds soon after, *that these Properties of God* (his pardoning mercy, &c.) *Christ hath revealed in his Doctrine, in that Revelation he hath made of God and his will, but the life of this knowledge lies in an acquaintance with his Person, wherein the express image and beams of this glory of his Father doth shine forth:* that is, that these things are clearly, eminently, and savingly, only to be discovered in Jesus Christ; as he explains himself. So that it seems, the Gospel of Christ makes a very imperfect and obscure discovery of the Nature, and Attributes, and Will of God, and the Methods of our Recovery; we may thoroughly understand whatever is revealed in the Gospel, and yet not have a *clear and saving knowledge* of these things, unless we gain a more intimate acquaintance with the *Person of Christ.* This indeed advances the *Person of Christ* very much, but is no great commendation of his Gospel and Prophetick Office: It sets up a new Rule of Faith above the Gospel,

Of Acquaintance with the Person of Christ.

Gospel, viz. an acquaintance with Christs Person, in whom dwell all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.

But that you may better understand the whole Mystery of this *Acquaintance with the Person of Christ*; I shall first show you what Additions these men make to the Gospel of Christ, from an Acquaintance with his Person; and secondly, show you what an unsafe way of arguing this is, and how prejudicial to the Christian Religion. First, To shew you what Additions these men make to the Gospel of Christ, from an Acquaintance with his Person: And I confess I am very much beholden to this Author, for acknowledging whence they fetch all their *Orthodoxy*, and *Gospel Mysteries*; for I had almost pored my Eyes out with seeking for them in the Gospel, and could never find them; but I learn now that indeed they are not to be found there, unless we be first acquainted with the *Person of Christ*. This is an argument well worth considering, and if this discourse should prove long, (as I fear it will) I doubt not but the Usefulness of it will be a sufficient Reward both to the Writer and Reader. And since I owe this Discovery to Dr. *John Owen*, I shall confine my self to his method, who in the place above-mentioned tells us, That *the sum of*

*Digr. 2.
Of the Excellency of
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res, p. 89.*

all true Wisdom and Knowledge may be reduced to these three heads.

First, *The Knowledge of God, his Nature and Properties.*

Secondly, *The knowledge of our selves, with reference to the Will of God concerning us.*

Thirdly, *Skill to walk in Communion with God.*

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In these three is summed up all true Wisdom and Knowledge, and not any of them is to any purpose to be obtained, or is manifested, but only in and by the Lord Christ.

Where *By*, is fallaciouſly added to include the Revelations Chriſt hath made, whereas his firſt undertaking was to ſhow how impoſſible it is to underſtand theſe things *ſavingly* and *clearly*, notwithstanding all thoſe Revelations God hath made of Himſelf and his Will, by *Moses*, and the Prophets, and by Chriſt himſelf, without *an acquaintance with his Perſon*.

But to let that paſs, I ſhall begin with the Knowledge of God, his Nature and Properties; and I ſhall not particularly examine every thing he ſays, but, principally take notice of thoſe peculiar Discoveries of the Nature of God, which the World was ignorant of before, and of which Revelation is wholly ſilent, but are now *clearly* and *ſavingly* learnt (as the Doctor pretends) from an *Acquaintance with Chriſts Perſon*.

The Light of Nature, and the Works of Creation and Providence, and thoſe manifold Revelations God hath made of himſelf to the World, eſpecially that laſt and moſt perfect Revelation by *Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, aſſure us, that God is infinite in all Perfections; that he is ſo powerful, that he can do whatever he pleaſes; ſo wiſe, that he knows how to order every thing for the beſt, ſo good, that he deſires and deſigns the happineſs of all his Creatures according to the capacity of their natures; ſo holy, that he hath a natural love for all good men, and will not fail to reward them; but hates all ſin and wickedneſs, and will

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Of Acquaintance with the Person of Christ.

as certainly punish all obstinate and incorrigible Sinners ; but yet that he is very patient and long-suffering towards the worst of men, and uses various methods of kindness and severity to reclaim them, and is as ready to pardon them, when they return to their duty, as a kind Father is to receive an humble and penitent Prodigal. These Properties of God are plainly revealed in the Scripture, without any further Acquaintance with the Person of Christ ; And had Christ never appeared in the World, yet we had reason to believe that God is thus wise, and good, and holy, and merciful, because not onely the Works of Nature and Providence, but the Word of God, assure us that he is so : the Appearance of Christ did not first discover the Nature of God to us, but onely gave us a greater expression of Gods goodness than ever we had before, and confirms us in the belief of what we had learnt before from Nature and Revelation ; just as his Resurrection, which is an ocular Demonstration of another Life, confirms us in the belief of that blessed Immortality which he hath promised ; and yet we could not have learnt this neither from the Person of Christ, had he not told us for what ends he came into the World, as will appear more anon.

*Digr. 2.
p. 93.*

And is not this a confident man to tell us, that *the Love of God to Sinners, and his pardoning Mercy, could never have enter'd into the heart of man but by Christ* ; when the experience of the whole World confutes him ; for whatever becomes of his new Theories, both *Jews and Heathens* (who understood nothing at all of what Christ was to do in order to our Recovery) did believe God to be

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be gracious and merciful to Sinners, and had reason to do so, because God himself had assured the Jews, *that he was a gracious and merciful God, pardoning iniquity, transgressions, and sins*: And those natural notions the Heathens had of God, and all those discoveries God had made of himself in the Works of Creation and Providence, did assure them, that God is very good, and it is not possible to understand what goodness is, without pardoning Grace.

But yet the truth is, considering what these men mean by the Love, and pardoning Grace, and Justice, and Patience, and Long-suffering of God, I must acknowledge, that these Properties could never have been discovered but by a too familiar acquaintance with Christ's Person; for Nature and Revelation say nothing of them:

As for instance, He tells us, that in Christ (that is, in his Death and Sufferings for our Sins) *God hath manifested the naturalness of this Righteousness (i. e. Vindictive Justice in punishing Sin) unto him, in that it was impossible that it should be diverted from Sinners, without the interposing of a Propitiation*. That is, that God is so just and righteous, that he cannot pardon Sin without satisfaction to his Justice: Now this indeed is such a notion of Justice as is perfectly new, which neither Scripture nor Nature acquaints us with: for all Mankind have accounted it an act of Goodness (without the least suspicion of Injustice in it) to remit Injuries and Offences, without exacting any punishment: And that he is so far from being just, that he is cruel and savage, who will remit no offence, till he hath satisfied his revenge.

*Digr. 2.
p. 93.*

venge. That part of Justice which consists in punishing Offenders, was always look'd on as an Instrument of Government, and therefore the exacting or remitting punishment was referred to the Wisdom of Governours, who might spare, or punish, as they saw Reason for it, without being unjust in either: And therefore had not one who pretends to so great and personal an Acquaintance with Christ said so, I should rather have thought, that God's requiring such a Sacrifice as the Death of Christ, for the expiation of our Sins, was not because he could not do otherwise, but because his infinite Wisdom judged this the best and most effectual way of dispensing his Grace.

Ibid. p. 95. But though this be a very terrible discovery of the naturalness of Gods Righteousness, or Vindictive Justice, yet he makes some amends for it in that comfortable discovery of his Patience and Long-suffering towards Sinners; for now (as he adds) in Christ *the very Nature of God is discovered to be Love and Kindness*: A happy change this, from all Justice to all Love! But how comes this to pass? Why the account of that is very plain: because (if I may take liberty to put his words into plain English) the Justice of God hath glutted it self with revenge on Sin in the Death of Christ, and so henceforward we may be sure, he will be very kind, as a revengeful man is, when his passion is over; for so he speaks very honourably of God, *Whatever discoveries were made of the Patience and Lenity of God unto us, yet if it were not withal revealed, that the other Properties of God, as his Justice and Revenge for Sin, had their actions*
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could never have learnt, had not some men falsely
pretended to such an Acquaintance with the Per-
son of Christ as contradicts those natural notions
which all men have of God, and the plain Re-
velations of the Gospel. The sum of which is,
that God is all Love and Patience, when he hath
taken his fill of Revenge, as others use to say,
That the Devil is very good when he is pleased.

But however Sinners have great reason to re-
joyce in it, when they consider the nature and
end of God's Patience and Forbearance towards
them, viz. *That it is Gods taking a course in his in-
finite Wisdom and Goodness, that we should not be
destroyed, notwithstanding our sins.* That as before
the least Sin could not escape without a just pu-
nishment, Justice being so natural to God, that he
cannot forgive without punishing; so the Justice
of God being now satisfied by the death of Christ,
the greatest sins can do us no hurt, but we shall
escape with a *Notwithstanding our sins.* This it
seems we learn from an Acquaintance with the
Person of Christ, though his Gospel instructs us
otherwise, that *without Holiness no man shall see
God.*

As for the *Wisdom of God*, (which is another
property he instanceth in) no doubt, but the Go-
spel of Christ makes great and glorious Discove-

Of Acquaintance with the Person of Christ.

ries of it ; but then this is not very consistent with those other Discoveries of the Nature of God which these men say they learn from the Person of Christ : For if Justice be so natural to God, that nothing could satisfy him but the Death of his own Son ; the Redemption of the World by Christ may discover his Justice or his Goodness, but not his Wisdom ; for Wisdom consists in the choice of the best and fittest means to attain an end, when there are more ways than one of doing it.

But it requires no great Wisdom to chuse, when there is but one possible way : And whatever Wisdom there is in Gods redeeming the World by his own Son, the knowledge of it is wholly owing to the Revelations of the Gospel, and not to such a fanciful Acquaintance with Christ as these men talk of.

Thus you see what excellent Discoveries of the Nature of God are owing to an *Acquaintance with the Person of Christ* : And the second thing we learn from hence is, *The Knowledge of our Selves, and that in respect of Sin, and in respect of Righteousness.*

As for Sin, the Gospel assures us, that God is an irreconcilable Enemy to all wickedness, it being so contrary to his own most holy Nature, that if he have any love for himself, and any esteem and value for his own Perfections and Works, he must hate sin, which is so unlike himself, and which destroys the Beauty and Perfection of his Workmanship. For this end he sent his Son into the World to destroy the works of the Devil, and to reduce Mankind to their obedience to their great

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great Creator, to restore them to the Upright-
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end of his holy Laws, and precious Promises, and
exemplary Life, and meritorious Death, and glo-
rious Resurrection, and powerful Intercession for
us, to deliver us from the Power and Dominion
of Sin; to make us first holy, as God is, and then
to receive us into that Blessed place where God
dwells.

But now *Acquaintance with the Person of Christ*
makes just such a discovery of Sin, as it did of
the *naturalness of God's Justice to him*; i. e. that
“ the desert and demerit of Sin is such, that it is
“ impossible to make any Atonement and Satisfa-
“ ction to the Justice and Wrath of God, but on-
“ ly by the Death of Christ, otherwise Christ had
“ died in vain: that is, that God could not forgive
“ it without full Satisfaction, which nothing but
“ the Death of Christ could make.

Thus we learn *our disability to answer the* P. 110.
Mind and Will of God in all or any of the obedience
he requireth: that is, that it is impossible for us to
do any thing that is good, but we must be acted
like Machines, by an external force, by the irre-
sistible power of the Grace and Spirit of God:
This I am sure is a new Discovery; we learn no
such thing from the Gospel; and I do not see
how he proves it from an Acquaintance with
Christ.

But still there is a more glorious discovery than
this behind, and that is, *The glorious end wher-*
unto Sin is appointed and ordained, (I suppose he
means by God) *is discovered in Christ, viz. for*

P. 112.

the demonstration of Gods Vindictive Justice, in measuring out to it a meet recompence of Reward, and for the praise of Gods glorious Grace in the pardon and forgiveness of it. That is, it could not be known how just and severe God is, but by punishing Sin; nor how good and gracious God is, but by pardoning it; and therefore lest his Justice and Mercy should never be known to the World, he appoints and ordains Sin to this end; that is, Decrees that men shall sin, that he may make some of them the Vessels of his Wrath, and the Examples of his fierce Vengeance and Displeasure; and others the Vessels of his Mercy, to the praise and glory of his free Grace in Christ: This indeed is such a Discovery as Nature and Revelation could not make. For Nature would teach us, that so infinitely a glorious Being, as God is, needs not Sin and Misery to recommend his Glory and Perfections; and that so holy a God, who so perfectly hates every thing that is wicked; would not truck and barter with Sin and the Devil for his glory; and that so good a God had much rather be glorious in the Happiness, and Perfection, and Obedience of his Creatures, than in their Sin and Misery: And Revelation tells us the same thing, that as much as Sin is for the glory of his Vindictive Justice, yet God takes no pleasure in punishing, *delights not in the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should return and live*: That is, he had rather there were no occasion for punishing, than be made glorious by such Acts of Vengeance: and therefore though God be so holy as to punish incorrigible Sinners, and so merciful, as to forgive all true Penitents, through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Christ, yet he did decree Sin to this Pardoning Mercy the Divine Nature primarily designed cannot be without the Misery of his consistent with the Nature. Thus though these men were wise, from an Acquaintance with

Thus much for with respect to Sin Jesus. But then is, *where with we have Acquaintance with* how unable we are without which the how unable we are and yet nothing and Wrath of God our Sins; and not ward, but a perfect What shall we do escape Hell, or gether expiate for of the time to come? by an Acquaintance ates former Iniquity guilt of sin: but guilty; we must at all Sin is to be answered is to be fulfilled. Not only in Christ, W

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Of Acquaintance with the Person of Christ.

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Christ, yet he did not ordain, and appoint, and decree Sin to this end: for Vindictive Justice and Pardoning Mercy are but secondary Attributes of the Divine Nature, and therefore God cannot primarily design the glorifying of them; for that cannot be without primarily designing the Sin and Misery of his Creatures, which would be inconsistent with the Goodness and Holiness of his Nature. Thus Nature and Revelation teaches, though these men pretend to have learn't otherwise, from an Acquaintance with Christ.

Thus much for the knowledge of our selves with respect to Sin, *which is hid only in the Lord Jesus*. But then we learn what *our Righteousness is, wherewith we must appear before God, from an Acquaintance with Christ*. We have already learn't how unable we are to make atonement for our sins, without which they can never be forgiven, and how unable we are to do any thing that is good: and yet nothing can deliver us from the Justice and Wrath of God, but a full Satisfaction for our Sins; and nothing can give us a title to a Reward, but a perfect and unfinning Righteousness: *What shall we do in this case? How shall we escape Hell, or get to Heaven, when we can neither expiate for our past Sins, nor do any good for the time to come? why here we are relieved again by an Acquaintance with Christ: His Death expiates former Iniquities, and removes the whole guilt of sin: but this is not enough that we are not guilty; we must also be actually righteous; not only all Sin is to be answered for, but all Righteousness is to be fulfilled*. Now this Righteousness we find only in Christ, *We are reconciled to God by his* P. 117.

Of Acquaintance with the Person of Christ.

Death, and saved by his Life; that *Actual Obedience* he yielded to the whole Law of God, is that *Righteousness* whereby we are saved: VVe are innocent by virtue of his Sacrifice and Expiation, and righteous with his Righteousness.

Now this is a mighty comfortable discovery, how we may be righteous without doing any thing that is good or righteous. And I confess we could never have know this *clearly and savingly* by the Gospel of Christ; for that makes a different representation of it; tells us expressely, that *he is righteous who doth righteousness*, that *without Holiness no man shall see God*: that the onely way to obtain the pardon of our Sins, is to repent of them, and forsake them; and the onely thing that gives a right to the Promises of future glory, is to obey the Laws, and imitate the Example of our Saviour, and to be transformed into the Nature and Likeness of God: and though our Obedience be not in every thing exact and perfect, yet if it be sincere, we shall be accepted for the sake of Christ, and by virtue of that Covenant of Grace which he hath sealed with his Blood, which admits of an Evangelical, instead of a strict Legal Perfection: such different Discoveries doth an Acquaintance with the Gospel, and with the Person of Christ, make.

*Digr. 2.
p. 115.*

The third Part of our Wisdom is to walk with God, and to that is required Agreement, acquaintance, a way, strength, boldness, and aiming at the same end: and all these, with the Wisdom of them, are bid in the Lord Jesus. The sum of which in short is this:
"That Christ having expiated our Sins, and fulfilled all Righteousness for us, though we have
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“ no personal Righteousness of our own, but are
“ as contrary to God, as Darkness is to Light,
“ and Death to Life, and an universal Pollution
“ and Defilement to an universal and glorious
“ Holiness, and Hatred to Love; yet the Righ-
“ teousness of Christ is a sufficient, nay the only
“ Foundation of our agreement, and upon that,
“ of our walking with God: Though St. John
tells us, *If we say we have fellowship with him, and
walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the Truth; but
if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, then
have we fellowship one with another, and (then) the
Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all
sins, 1 John i. 6, 7.* And besides this, our onely ac-
quaintance with God, and knowledge of him, is bid-
in Christ, which his Word and Works could not dis-
cover, as you heard above. “ And he is the onely
“ way, wherein we must walk with God, and we
“ receive all our strength from him; and he
“ makes us bold and confident too, having re-
“ moved the guilt of sin, that now we may look
“ Justice in the face, and *whet our Knife at the
Counter-door*, all our Debts being discharged by
Christ, as *these bold Acquaintances and Familiars
of Christ* use to speak. And in Christ we design the
same end that God doth, which is the advancement of
his own glory: that is, I suppose, by trusting to
the Expiation and Righteousness of Christ for Sal-
vation, without doing any thing our selves, we
take care that God shall not be robbed of the glo-
ry of his free Grace by a competition of any Me-
rits and Deserts of our own.

These are those great Gospel-Mysteries and Soul-
saving Truths, which (as these men would have

us believe) are learnt from an Acquaintance with Christ's Person, which his Gospel is so silent in, or speaks so darkly and imperfectly of, that it was impossible to understand them, without being first acquainted with his Person. And that you may the better understand the whole design and contrivance of it, I shall put every thing into its just and natural order :

God then from the beginning designed to glorify his Justice, and his Mercy ; and because there had been no occasion either to punish or pardon, unless Man had sinned, he *appointed and ordained Sin for the glory of his Vindictive Justice, and Pardoning Grace* : and accordingly (since nothing can withstand the Decrees and Appointments of God) it pleaseth God that Man should sin, but when he hath sinned he is extremely displeased with it, and now his Justice must be satisfied ; for it is impossible for God to forgive the least sin without a compleat and perfect Satisfaction ; this falls hard upon those miserable Wretches, whose ill fortune it was, without any faults of theirs, to be left out of the Roll of Election, and who have no way to satisfy the Divine Justice, but by their Eternal Torments ; by this it appears how rigorously Just God is, that he will never pardon the least Sin, when he can serve his own glory by the misery and confusion of Sinners.

But this is but one part of the glory of God, to be Just in punishing Sin, the other is to shew Mercy in sparing and rewarding the Sinner ; now here was the great difficulty, how God should be Just, and Merciful too ; when Justice requires a full Satisfaction, and Mercy excludes all Desert. For the

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the demerit of Sin being infinite, no Creature can expiate Sin, but by enduring infinite, that is, endless Torments; and those who must be always miserable, can never be the Subjects of God's Mercie.

To unite these two extreams, and reconcile such contradictions, was a work of infinite Wisdom, as well as Goodness: And it was effected thus: God sends his onely begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ into the World, to fulfil all Righteousness in his Life, and to make a full Satisfaction for Sin by his Death. For his Blood being of infinite value, (as being the blood of the Son of God) could expiate an infinite guilt, and so make a compleat satisfaction to Justice; which is more glorified by the Death of Christ, than by the Eternal miseries of all the Sinners in the World, because it discovers the *naturalness of Justice to God*, which is the *Position* to be maintain'd) that he could not pardon without full satisfaction, that is, that he is so just, that he hath not one dram of goodness in him, till his rage and vengeance be satisfied; which is I confess a glorious kind of Justice:

But now *the Justice and Vengeance of God having their actions assigned them to the full*; that is, (for I can make no better of it) being glutted and satiated with the Blood of Christ; God may pardon as many and great Sins as he pleases, without fear of the least imputation of Injustice: and now a glorious and more comfortable Scene of Mercy begins to appear; now God embraces Sinners as a kind Father, and accounts them perfectly innocent in virtue of that Satisfaction Christ hath made

made for their Sins ; but this is not enough, the Law of God must be fulfilled, as well as his Justice satisfied ; we must be righteous, as well as innocent, otherwise we may escape punishment, but can expect no Reward, (though I confess I should have thought, that Christ had satisfied for Sins of Omission, together with Sins of Commission : and as by his Satisfaction for our doing what we ought not to do, we are reputed by God as having never done any thing amiss, so by his Satisfaction for our neglecting what we ought to have done, we might by the same reason be reputed by God perfectly righteous, to have done all, that we ought, to have kept the whole Law, but it seems this was not sufficient) and therefore as the satisfaction of Christ is imputed to us for the forgiveness of sins, so the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us to make us perfectly righteous ; and this makes the Grace of God perfectly free without any suspicion of merit or desert in us.

And now God and Sinners may agree very well and walk comfortably together, for though *they* have guilt enough, and *be* Justice enough to destroy a World, yet there is no danger, since Christ hath satisfied Justice ; and though he be infinitely holy and pure, perfect light, and Sinners abominably filthy, yet there is no fear he should loath and abhor them, when they are Cloathed with the whit. and spotless Robes of Christs righteousness ; and they are so well acquainted now with the design of God to advance the glory of his free Grace in their Salvation that they are very secure, that neither their past sins,
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nor present habitual impurities can do them any hurt: but they *shall be saved with a notwithstanding their sins.*

These are those fundamental Doctrines, with which these men have blessed the World from a pretended acquaintance with Christ's Person, which are so unlike the *holy Religion of our Saviour*, that for distinction-sake, it ought to be called the *Religion of Christ's Person*, in opposition to the Religion of his Gospel.

And since we have discovered the Principles of this new Religion of Christ's Person, I cannot forbear inquiring briefly into the practical inferences from it, that we may at once view the grand Mystery of this Religion both in its Principles and Practice.

Now the practice of this Religion consists in *accepting of Christ, and coming to him, and applying his Merits, and Satisfaction, and Righteousness, to our selves for pardon and justification; and in those Duties which are consequent upon such an Union and Closure with Christ.* For Christ having satisfied for our Sins, and fulfilled the Righteousness of the Law for us, it is a plain and necessary consequence, that we have nothing to do, but to get an interest in the Satisfaction and Righteousness of Christ, that they may be imputed to us; for he is very ignorant of Christ, who hopes that any thing else will avail him to Salvation.

Now that we may thus *come to Christ, and close with him, it is absolutely necessary that we be sensible of our lost and undone condition out of Christ.* How impossible it is for us to atone the wrath of God, or to have any Righteousness of our own, which
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Of Acquaintance with the Person of Christ.

can bear the severe scrutiny of his Justice ; and in a sence of this we must work our Imagination and Fancy into great Terrors and Agonies, and a dismal fear of the unsupportable wrath of God, and his natural and inexorable justice : this is the *spirit of bondage*, which we must lie under, before we can attain to the Spirit of Adoption : for we shall never value and prize Christ, and go to him for Salvation, till we are convinc'd of our necessity of him, and driven to him by the threatnings and terrours of the Law ; and the Promise of Ease and Rest, is made only to the *weary and heavy laden* ; and these only shall be satistied, who hunger and thirst after the *imputed Righteousness of Christ*.

And now being thus stung with sin, it is time for us to look up to Christ, as the *Israelites* did on the brazen Serpent, that we may be healed ; now we must begin to see his Fulness, and Perfection, and Suitableness to the Wants and Necessities of our Souls, that he is our Atonement and Expiation, our Wisdom and Righteousness, all that we can desire or need.

And if it should so happen, that the sense of our Sins and Unworthiness makes us afraid to come to Christ, and apply him to our Souls, we must then have recourse to our acquaintance with the Person of Christ, to answer all our Doubts, and quiet our Consciences. As for instance : *Dost thou object, I am a great Sinner, and will Christ save me ?* The Answer is easie, *Whom did Christ come to save ? Whom doth God justifie, but the Ungodly ? Did he take our Flesh upon him, and not our Sins ?* Ballance all things together, your Sins and
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Christ's Merits together, and the greatness of your Sins should not so much discourage you from coming to Christ, as the greatness of his Merits should encourage you to come to him: For where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound. Compare your Distress and Christ's Compassion together, your Wants and Christ's Fulness together, your Unworthiness and Christ's Freeness together, your Desires and Christ's Invitations together, your own Weakness and Christ's Strength together, Satan's Objections and Christ's Answers together; and now if Christ do not prevail above all thy fears, thou art not worthy to be acquainted with him.

Nay further, If thou objectest, *What have I to Shepherd's do with Christ? Why should he have to do with me, who have such an unholy, vile, hard, blind, and most wicked heart?* (the Objection you see is full, and home to the purpose, but mark the Answer) *O for the Lord's sake dishonour not the Grace of Christ, it is true, thou canst not come to Christ, till thou art laden, humble, and separated from thy sins---* yet remember for ever, that no more sorrow for sin, no more separation from sin, is necessary to thy closing with Christ, than so much as makes thee willing, or rather not unwilling, that the Lord should take it away; and know, if thou seekest for a greater measure of humiliation, antecedent to thy closing with Christ, than this, thou shovest the more pride therein, who wilt rather go into thy self, to make thy self holy and humble, than thou mayest be worthy of Christ, than go out of thy self unto the Lord Jesus, to take away thy sin; In a word, who thinkest, Christ cannot love thee, until thou makest thy self fair, and when thou thinkest thy self so (which is pride) thou wilt then think otherwise of Christ.

And

Sound Believer,
p. 80.

And now the reason of all this is very plain to those who are thus acquainted with the Person of Christ; "For he is our Physician, and therefore we
 " must not think of healing our selves, but must
 " go to him with all our diseases & sores about us,
 " that he alone may have the honour of healing us.
 " He is a Fountain set open for sin & for uncleanness, & therefore we must go to him with all our
 " filthiness to be cleansed and washed, for if we be
 " first clean, there is no need of a Fountain. He
 " is all Fulness, and therefore it is not fit we should
 " carry any thing to him, as if he needed any
 " thing from us. He is our Righteousness, and
 " therefore, if we have any, we must leave all our
 " Righteousness behind us, when we go to him.
 " He is all Beauty and Loveliness, and therefore
 " we must not carry any Beauty to him, but receive it all from him: So that all we have to
 " do in this great work, is to go to Christ weary,
 " and sick, and filthy, and naked, stript of every
 " thing, but our sins and impurities, to receive
 " ease, and health, and fulness, and beauty from
 " him. Christ is the Gift of God, and therefore
 " we must onely receive him by the hand of Faith
 " and apply him to our Souls: And then what a blessed change and metamorphosis is there presently made in us! for though we continue as we were, yet we have all in Christ. We are now united to him and made his Members and Spouse and so have an interest in all his Merits and Ful-

**Watson's
 Christ's
 Loveliness
 p. 462.*

** Christ saith to a Believer, With my Body, yea with my Blood, I endow thee; and a Believer saith to Christ, With my Soul I thee worship, (as if Christ and a Believer were married by the Liturgy.)*

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*Watson's
Christ's
Loveliness
p. 467.*

*Watson's
Christian
Character,
p. 60.*

*The Spiritu
al Vine,
p. 167.*

Shepherd's
Sincere
Convert,
p. 77.

Christ's speaks, *Weakness* (that is, no Strength, no Grace, no, nor so much as sense of poverty) do not debar us from God's Mercy; and the reason is very precious and convincing; for the Husband is bound to bear with the Wife as the weaker Vessel, and shall we think God will exempt himself from his own Rules, and not bear with his weak Spouse. Christ hath taken upon him to purge his Spouse, and make her fit for himself; so that if she be not purged, and cleansed, and made fair and lovely, whose fault can it be but his own, and surely that can be no just reason for a divorce. Thus you see, what it is to come to Christ, and accept of him, and close with him; the result of which is (so far as I can understand it) to be content to be saved by Christ, without being either humble or holy, fair or beautiful, any otherwise, than as he is pleased to make us so, by his satisfaction for our sins, and the imputation of his Righteousness to us.

Let us now consider what Duties are consequent upon such a union and closure of the Soul with Christ, and they are *consequential, conjugal Affections*. As first, A mighty love for her Saviour, and Head, and Husband: the Soul must be enamoured with the Beauty, and Loveliness, and Preciousness of Christ, must form pleasant and charming Idea's of him, and feel great Ravishments and Transports of Passion for him: You must be sick of love to Christ, O ye Saints! and let him lie as a bundle of Myrrhe always between your Breasts; Christ is maxime diligibilis (as the Schoolmen speak) he is the very Abstract and Quintessence of Beauty, he is a whole Paradise of Delight, he is
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Watson's
Christ's
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p. 462.

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the flower of Sharon, enriched with orient colours, and perfumed with the sweetest savour: O wear this flower not in your bosoms, but in your hearts, and be always smelling to it, and show your love to this lovely Saviour. You must delight in his embraces, and thirst after a more intimate acquaintance with him; you must never be satisfied one moment without him, but must follow him from one Ordinance to another, and never be satisfied unless you meet with Christ, and enjoy communion with him in Ordinances: this is the Foundation of the Saints love to Ordinances, that there they meet with the Beloved of their Souls, and enjoy the sweet Carresses and Endearments of his Love; there they hear of his Beauty, and Loveliness, and Riches, and Fulness, and All-sufficiency; and though Evangelical Truths will not down with a Natural Heart, such an one had rather hear some quaint point of some Vertue or Vice stood upon, than any thing in Christ; yet when the Grace of God hath altered him, then if all Truths the Truths of Christ savour best, those Truths that come out of the mouth of Christ, and out of the Ministry concerning Christ, they are most sweet of all. Such sanctified Souls and Ears loath all dull, insipid, Moral Discourses, which are perpetually inculcating their Duty on them, and troubling them with a great many Rules and Directions for a good Life; which he is pleased to call the quaint Points of Vertue and Vice; for this is not to enjoy Christ in Ordinances, they go away from such entertainment without having met with the Beloved of their Soul, without hearing any news from him, or having the least glimpse of his Beauty and Perfections; which

Of Acquaintance with the Person of Christ.

is a plain contradiction to the nature and design of Ordinances, which are onely for our enjoyment of *communion with Jesus Christ*; that is, to unload our Consciences, and disburden our Sins on him in our Confessions, and to beg of him the imputation of his Righteousness to make us lovely, and to put our Souls into some Raptures and amorous Passions to him, and to hear some good news from him by his Ministers, how much he loves us, and longs after us, how pitiful he is to us, ready to over-look all our miscarriages, and cover all our Deformities with his own Beauty and Loveliness, and to take us to the enjoyment of himself, that where he is, we also may be, perpetually to behold his Glory, and solace our selves in his Love.

Secondly, Another *consequential conjugal Act* is, *Obedience to our spiritual Husband*; but though the Gospel of Christ be very plain and express in exacting this from us, and inculcates it so much that it favours too strong of a legal Spirit and Dispensation, yet it is very hard to find a proper place for it in this new Religion, or to deduce it from an acquaintance with Christ's Person.

For (as these men state it) this is not necessary at all to our *coming to Christ, and closing with him*, nay it is a great hindrance to it, for we must bring nothing to Christ with us, the marriage is consummated without it, and then we have less need of it than before; for then we are adorned with the Beauty of Christ, are holy with his Holiness, we are delivered from the guilt of sin by his expiation, he must look to it to see the debt discharged, which he hath now taken upon himself, and we are

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are righteous with his Righteousness, which gives us an actual right to Glory, and then we can need no Righteousness of our own to save us, which were to suppose a defect in the Righteousness of Christ; so that, how Obedience should come in, is hard to say. It is concluded on all hands by those who are most intimately acquainted with the Person of Christ, that it is but a *consequentia* Duty, that which ought to follow our Espousals with Christ, and Justification by him, as a Fruit and Effect of it; but yet the reason of that is not evident. Some tell us, that it is due upon account of Gratitude and Thankfulness to our Saviour, which I cannot so well understand, unless our Righteousness and Obedience be due to Christ in thankfulness to him, for saving us without Obedience and Righteousness, which is just as broad as long, and we get nothing by the bargain. Especially considering that this is hardly reconcilable with that essential condition of accepting Christ, wherein these spiritual Espousals consist; viz. *That the Soul consents to take Christ on his own terms, to save him in his own way, and saith, Lord, I would have had thee and salvation in my way, that it might have been partly of mine Endeavours, and as it were by the works of the Law (that is, by obeying the Laws of the Gospel) but I am now willing to receive thee, and to be saved in thy way, meerly by Grace: that is, without doing any thing, without obeying thee; the most contented Spouse certainly that ever was in the World, to submit to such hard conditions as to be saved for nothing; but what a pretty complement doth the Soul make to Christ after all this, when she adds,*

J. O. Communion. p. 63.

And though I would have walk't according to my own Mind, yet now I wholly give up my self to be ruled by thy Spirit. But the Mystery of this will appear in what follows : for others make Obedience necessary upon account of our participation of Christ's Fulness, for this is one part of his fulness, a power and ability to do the will of God ; and this proves that it will be so, but makes it no otherwise necessary to us, than as we are necessarily passive in it, and this is all the Soul means in giving it self up to be ruled by the Spirit of Christ, to be passively, not actively good, to submit (as needs it must) to the irresistible working of the Divine Spirit, and to obey, when it can rebel no longer.

Thus, Reader, I have given thee an entire Scheme of a new Religion, resulting from a pretended Acquaintance with Christ's Person, in all its fundamental Principles and Practices ; here is every jot and tittle of Reason it is founded on, or pretends to, and the most obvious and easie connexion of one part with another, whereby thou maist easily judge of the whole Fabrick and contrivance ; and I think there needs no more to expose it to the scorn of every considering man, who cannot but discover how inconsistent the Religion of *Christ's Person* is with the Religion of his *Gospel* : This is that Knowledge of Christ these men glory in, as containing greater Mysteries and more Soul-saving Truths, than are revealed in the *Gospel*.

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SECT. III.

How unsafe it is to found Religion upon a pretended Acquaintance with Christ's Person.

HAVING thus shewed you what that Religion is, which these men pretend to learn from an Acquaintance with Christ's Person, it is time now to consider this way of Reasoning, and shew you what an unsafe Foundation it is, whereon to build any Religion.

And first, this is at best to build Religion upon uncertain Conjectures, or ambiguous and doubtful Reasons; for suppose men were wary and cautious in drawing conclusions from the *Person of Christ*, (which few of these men are) yet what assurance can they have that their inferences are true? Had we seen Christ in the flesh, and been Witnesses of the many Miracles he wrought, of his Death upon the Cross, and his Resurrection from the Dead, had he not acquainted us with the end and design of all this, we might have ghest, and ghest till we had been weary, but it is great odds we had never ghest right, or at best, could never have been secure we had.

SEC We may understand necessary Causes from necessary Effects, and necessary Effects from necessary Causes; if we see a Fire, we know it burns

Something ; and if we see Smoak, we may safely conclude, there is some Fire : But where the connexion of the Effect with the Cause is not necessary, but arbitrary, doth not depend upon the nature of things, but the Institution and Appointment of free Agents, we can understand no more of the Design, than the principal Agent is pleased to tell us. This is the case here : Christ's coming into the World, and all that he did and suffered for us, is the pure effect of God's free Grace, and the design of his unsearchable Wisdom and Counsel, and therefore none can understand the reason and contrivance of this, but he who lay in the bosom of his Father, and those who learn from him : so that whoever would understand the Religion of our Saviour, must learn it from his Doctrine, not from his Person; because there is not a natural and necessary connexion between the Person of Christ, and what he did and suffered, and the Salvation of Mankind : the Incarnation, and Life, and Death, and Resurrection of Christ, were available to those ends for which God designed them, but the virtue and efficacy of them doth depend upon Gods Institution and Appointment, and therefore can be known only by Revelation.

When we are acquainted by Christ for what end he came into the world, and suffered, and died, and rose again, we may discover the Wisdom and Goodness of God in it, in sending us such a Saviour, and in qualifying him in so excellent a manner for the Work of our Redemption ; but we cannot safely draw any one conclusion from the Person of Christ, which his Gospel hath not expressly

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expresly taught, because we can know no more of the design of it, than what is there revealed.

And is it not intolerable presumption for men to mould and shape Religion according to their Fancies and Humours, and to stuff it with an infinite number of Orthodox Propositions, none of which are to be found in exprefs terms in Scripture, but are onely pretended to be deduced from thence by such imaginary consequences, from some little hints and appearances of things? Especially, is not this unpardonable in those men who cry down Reason for such a prophane and carnal thing, as must not presume to intermeddle in holy matters, and yet lay the Foundation of their Religion, and erect such glorious and magnificent Fabricks, on nothing else but some little shews and appearances of Reason? But the plain truth is this, when men argue from the Nature of God, and his Works and Providences, from the nature of Mankind, and those Eternal Notions of Good and Evil, and the essential differences of things, that is, when men argue from plain and undeniable Principles, which have an immutable and unchangable nature, and so can bear the stress and weight of a just consequence, this is carnal Reason; but when men argue from Fancies and Imaginations which have no stable nature, from some pretty Allusions and Similitudes, and Allegories, which have no certain shape, nor form, but what every mans fancy gives them, this is sanctified and spiritual Reason, but why I cannot imagine, unless that it so much resembles Ghosts and Shadows, which have nothing solid and substantial in them.

Secondly, How dangerous this way of reasoning from an acquaintance with Christs Person is, appears in this, that it will serve any mans turn, who hath any quickness and vigour of fancy. It is an easie matter at this rate to set up the trade of making new Hypotheses of Religion. I have already given you one draught and Scheme of Religion from a pretended acquaintance with Christ's Person, and it were easie to present you with many more, with as fair colours and pretences, and as exact and regular proportions, and fanciful consequences, and artificial connexions; I need not tell you, what use all our Allegorical Divines would make of this, who have the peculiar knack and gift of adapting every similitude and resemblance, to what purposes they please: We know how the *Valentinians* of old perverted all the passages of our Saviours Life and Death, by such fanciful Applications to confirm the Doctrine of their *Æones*, and the portentous production of their Gods, and to patronize all their vilest practices; and if we allow of this way, I know not why one mans fancy should not be admitted as well as anothers. But to shew how easily this acquaintance with Christ's Person may be made to serve different purposes, I shall oppose another Scheme of Religion, which is much more plainly deducible from an acquaintance with Christ's Person, to what these men advance for the great Mystery of the Gospel, and the only Spiritual Wisdom. And thus I argue:

Since we see the Eternal Son of God leave his Fathers Throne, and condescend to come into the World

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World in the nature and likeness of a Man, we may certainly conclude that it was upon a design of Love and Goodness; for had he intended to destroy the World, he would have cloathed himself with Thunder and Lightning, he would have appeared like himself with an awful and astonishing Majesty, and with all the terrible Solemnities of Vengeance and Judgment, incircled with Legions of Angels, and with Clouds of Smoak and Fire: But we now see nothing dreadful in his Looks, nor in his Conversation; he was made a man, as we are, which argues a good will and kindness to Humane Nature, he had all the sweetness of Innocence, and an obliging Goodness, that we have no reason to suspect any ill design under so charming and inviting an appearance; his Miracles were great and glorious, but not frightful and astonishing; they surprized with wonder, not with terrour and fear: his Almighty Power was displayed and manifested in Methods of Love and Kindness, in healing the Sick, and dispossessing Devils, in feeding the hungry, and raising the Dead, not in overturning Kingdoms and Empires, or bringing fire from Heaven to consume his Enemies. From all this we may safely conclude, that he came upon an Embassy of Peace, to assure the World of Gods good will towards them, and to reconcile the differences between God and Men. And when we consider further, that this Heavenly Ambassador and Mediator is no less than the eternal Son of God, by whom the Worlds were made, we may reasonably conclude, that he came upon no less design than of Universal Goodness, for he can have

have no temptation to partiality, as being equally concerned in the happiness of all men, and we cannot imagine why he should lay a narrower design of Love in the Redemption, than in the Creation of Mankind; that when in the first Creation he designed all men for Happiness, in this new and second Creation he should design and intend the Happiness onely of some few, which is, to make him less good in redeeming than in creating Mankind, though Creation cost him no more than the exercise of his Power, but Redemption the expence of his Blood: no sure, his Goodness did not become less infinite and boundless, when he became Man; the design of his appearing was to restore Mankind to that Honour, and Happiness, and Immortality they had lost; and to repair the sullied Glory of the first Creation by making all things new again.

Thus when we consider the Innocence and Holiness of his Life, that he was a great Example of an unaffected Piety towards God, and all the Vertues of an innocent and useful conversation with men, we may reasonably conclude, that his great design was to reform the debauch'd manners of the World, to reduce Mankind to the Obedience of God, to teach men how to live as well as talk, and to restore the practice of Piety and Justice, of Meekness and Humility, and an universal good will, which had been banished out of the World by the hypocritical Pretences of a more refined Sanctity in washing Hands and Dishes, in tithing Mint and Cumming, and such-like pieces of legal and ceremonial Righteousness: But now our Saviour by his Example

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as well as Laws, taught us another Lesson, that as we lost our Happiness at first by sin, so the way to regain the Favour of God, and an immortal Life, is by the practice of a sincere and universal Righteousness. He came to be our Example and Guide to Heaven, as well as our Mediator and Advocate; and therefore we must imitate his Life, if we would enjoy the benefits of his Death and Intercession; for so holy a Person can never be the Patron of Vice, nor an Advocate for impenitent and incorrigible Sinners.

When we remember, that Christ died as a Sacrifice & Propitiation for sin, this gives us a great Demonstration of Gods good will to us, how ready he is to pass by all our former Sins, in that he hath appointed an Atonement for us, and given no less Person than his own Son for our Ransom, which is the greatest assurance God could give us of his readiness to accept of true Penitents, and therefore the most powerful motive and encouragement to return to our Duty.

And besides this, the Death of Christ assures us, what the desert of Sin is, and what will be the portion of all impenitent Sinners: for in that he required the Death of his own Son to be an Atonement for Sin, he hath plainly declared that all Sinners deserve to die, and that none shall escape this just condemnation, but those who are washed and purified in the Blood of Christ: He will not pardon Sin without a Sacrifice, nor accept of any other Atonement but the Death of his Son; and accept of that for none, but those, who believe and obey the Gospel; and if God did
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not think fit to save true Penitents without a Ransom, where shall the Sinner and Ungodly appear. So that though we do not pretend to understand the strict Philosophy of that Atonement made by Christ, yet we may easily learn all that is useful and necessary for us to know; that Christs Death and Sacrifice for Sin seals the Covenant of Grace and Pardon to all penitent and reformed Sinners, and seals the irrevocable Decree of Reprobation against all others; for that Covenant, which is sealed with the Blood of so great and stupendious a Sacrifice, must needs be irrevocable and eternal.

In the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead, and his Ascension into Heaven, we have an ocular demonstration of the Rewards of Holiness and Obedience, that for the Innocence and Purity of his Life, and the Humility and Obedience of his Death, he is now exalted to the right hand of God, and cloathed with Majesty and Glory. That Power and Authority he is now invested with, secures us of the prevalency of his Intercession, of his constant Care and Providence over his Church, of the Influences of his Grace, and the supply of all our spiritual wants, and of that Glory and Happiness to which he will advance us at the last day.

All this we learn from an Acquaintance with Christs Person (as these men call it) and it were easie now to draw the whole Plot and Design of Christianity, to search into the deep Counsels of God, and to discover those Principles and Motives he was acted by, and the infinite Wisdom of the Contrivance, and the true Methods of a Sin-

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Sinners Recovery by Christ, and what that Homage and Worship is, which we owe our Saviour.

As to make some short Essay of it. Those natural notions which we have of God, acquaint us, that he is infinitely good, and the History of the Creation assures us, that God made the World to be an Image and Representation of his own Glory and Perfections, but especially Man, who was made after the Image of God, and endowed with that Wisdom and Knowledge, and all those Principles of Piety and Vertue, which would have made him a living and active Image of the Divine Perfections. This was the glory and happiness of his Nature, to know God, and to be like him, to praise and adore his great Benefactor, and to be inseparably united to him by those natural ties of Love and Obedience. For nothing else can be the Happiness of a reasonable Creature, but Conformity to the Divine Nature, which is the pattern and measure of all Rational Perfections and Happiness. And therefore when Mankind Apostatized from God, they miserably defeated the end of their Creation, and intercepted those natural Communications of the Divine Goodness, by making themselves unworthy and incapable of them: and now we may easily imagine how much a good God was grieved and offended with this, not as a haughty and imperious Prince would be with the Miscarriages and Rebellion of his Subjects, but as a-kind Father is displeased and grieved for the disobedience of his Children, for their refractory and unmanageable temper; not so much as an affront and contempt

tempt of his own Authority, but as it is a necessary cause of the ruine and misery of his Children, whose Happiness he so passionately desires and designs.

* Of the
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p. 19.

This made the Divine Goodness so restlessly zealous and concerned for the Recovery of Mankind; various ways he attempted in former Ages, but * with little success, as I observed before: but at last God sent his own Son our Lord Jesus Christ into the World to be the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, to seek and to save that which was lost.

And that we may be able in some measure to comprehend the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of this contrivance, and how well the means is fitted to the end, we must consider that the whole Mystery of the Recovery of Mankind, consists only in repairing the Divine Image, which was defaced by Sin; that is, in making all men truly good and vertuous. Sin is our apostasie from God, and doth as naturally make us miserable, as it makes us unlike the most happy Being. But Holiness restores us to our Primitive State, to the perfect constitution of our Natures, and makes us Good, and therefore Happy, as G O D is.

And this was the great difficulty to perswade men to be good, to work upon the different tempers, and inclinations and passions of Mankind, and to reduce them to the forsaken and untrodden paths of Vertue; and though the Laws and Precepts, the great Promises and Threatnings of the Gospel, confirmed by so many stupendious Miracles, and by the Resurrection of Christ from the

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the Dead, have in themselves a mighty power to reform the World, yet the consideration of Christ's Person of what he did, and suffered for us, gives a peculiar force and energy to them.

Sin and guilt makes men fearful, and it makes them disingenuous, they are apt to distrust Goodness, or to abuse it: will either believe God implacable, which makes them desperate, because there is no hope of pardon; or believe him to be fond and indulgent, which makes them saucy and presumptuous; and to prevent both these Extreams of Superstition, which are such profest Enemies to a sincere and unaffected Religion, God sent his own Son into the World, and by the greatness of his Person, and the manner and circumstances of his Appearance did confute them both.

If guilt make us afraid of God as an angry and severe Judge, behold here the distance taken away, in the Incarnation of the Son of God, who condescended to come down to us cloathed with our Nature, as a mild and a gentle Prince, by all the methods of love and sweetness to reduce us to our Allegiance and Subjection to God; in him we see the good will of God to Sinners; here is a demonstration of condescending Goodness, which stooped as low as Earth, and did not disdain the nature and appearance of a Man, nor the Conversation of Sinners, nor the shame of the Cross, nor the pale Terroures and Agonies of Death and the Grave.

And to remove all possible suspicion concerning Gods love to Sinners, the Son of God dies as a Sacrifice for our Sins, to make Atonement
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for us, and with his Blood seals the Covenant of Grace and Pardon, and all the Promises of Eternal Life. And still to give us the greater security of the performance of all this, our dying and suffering Lord is raised again from the Dead, and advanced to the right hand of Power and Majesty, to intercede for us.

Thus God deals with us after the manner of Men, and to encourage us to return to our Duty, hath given us all the security of our acceptance, that Guilt it self (though infinitely jealous and suspicious) could desire: for what could we wish for more, than that God should send so great and so beloved a Person to us on an Embassie of Peace; than that the Son of God should be our Propitiation & Advocate, our Lord and Judge, he who took our Nature and our Infirmities on him, who knows our Weakness and our Temptations, who died to expiate our Sins, and is entred into the Holy of Holies to intercede for us in the virtue of his Blood, and in the power of his Glory, and the triumphs of his Conquests, and with a tender and compassionate sense of our Infirmities.

But then on the other hand to cure our Presumption, that we may not think God to be so easie, as to be reconciled to Sinners & to their Vices together; the Death of Christ upon the Cross assures us what the merit is, and what the portion of Sin shall be; that all Sinners deserve to die, and shall certainly have their deserts, without a sincere Repentance and Reformation of their Lives; for to expiate Sin by Death can signify no less than this, that Death is the proper

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Recompence of Sins which are not Christ (as none are) shall certainly be a Sinner. Especially Priest and Sacrifice conceive, that he incorrigible Sinner extends no farther. He was made manifest no Sin.

Now though I what infinite Wisdomable, how God correctual way to reform so many powerful Endearments, such makes such a plea of God to the our Faith, and enflames our Love, and cites our Emulation Senses with the Arguments the lower and most Souls, and captivate dience of Christ.

From hence it is the true method of a Sinner what returns of love Lord and Saviour. all the powerful Arguments are contained in his Doctrine, and Exhortation Death, and Resur-

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Recompence of Sin, and therefore that those
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Christ (as none are, till we repent and reform)
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Sinner. Especially considering how holy our
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conceive, that he died, or that he intercedes for
incorrigible Sinners. The Sacrifice of his Death
extends no farther than the Example of his Life;
*He was made manifest to destroy Sin, and in him was
no Sin.*

Now though I dare not be so bold as to say,
what infinite Wisdom can do, yet it is not imagi-
nable, how God could have contrived a more ef-
fectual way to reform the World, which contains
so many powerful Obligations, such forceable
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tion of God to the World, which so confirms
our Faith, and encourages our Hopes, and en-
flames our Love, and awakens our Fears, and ex-
cites our Emulation, which doth even affect our
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dience of Christ.

From hence it is easie to understand what is the
true method of a Sinners Recovery by Christ, and
what returns of love and gratitude we owe our
Lord and Saviour. When we are so affected with
all the powerful Arguments to a new Life, which
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Heaven, and his Intercession for us, as to be sensible of the shame and folly of sin, and to be reconciled to the love and practice of true Piety and Holiness, then we partake in the Merits of his Sacrifice, and find the benefit of his Intercession, and have a title to all the Blessings and Promises of his Gospel: This was the design of Christ's coming into the World, not to distract our guilty minds with the Terrours of the Law, and the inexorable Justice of God. not to bring us under a legal Dispensation of Fear and Bondage, but to encourage us to forsake our Sins, and reform our Lives, by all the Endearments of Love and Goodness, and the lively Hopes of a blessed Immortality, mixt with an awful regard and reverence for God, who is a holy and righteous Judge, and an irreconcilable Enemy to all Sin. This is such a method of converting Sinners, as is proper to the Person of Christ, and the manner of his appearance, which was not designed to cause Tempests and Earthquakes in our minds like the Thunder and Lightning from Mount *Sinai*, but to work a Reformation in the World by more silent and gentle methods, and in more humane ways. If our Faith in Christ have reformed our lives, and rectified the temper and disposition of our minds, and made us sincere Lovers of God and Goodness, though we are not acquainted with these artificial methods of Repentance, have not felt the workings of the Law, nor the amazing terrours of Gods wrath, nor the raging despair of damned spirits, and then all on a sudden (as if we had never heard of any such thing before) have had Christ offered to

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to us, to be our Saviour, and heard the woings and beseechings of Christ to accept of him, and upon this have made a formal contract and espousal with Christ, and such-like workings of a heated fancy, and religious distraction, though our Conversion be not managed with so much Art and Method, and by so many steps and gradations, we are never the worse Christians for want of it. For indeed this must needs be the effect of Ignorance, not of Acquaintance with Christ, which suggests so many encouraging considerations to return to God as to a merciful and compassionate Father, and not to tremble at his presence, as a severe and inexorable Judge.

And hence we learn, that the truest expression of love to our Saviour, is not some fond and amorous passions, but obedience to his Laws, and the greatest honour we can do him, is to imitate his example, and to express the power of his Death and Resurrection in the exemplary Holiness of our Lives; for this best answers the end of his coming into the World, is the fruit of his Intercession for us, and the greatest Glory and Ornament of his spiritual Kingdom.

Thus I have given you a brief Scheme and Hypothesis of Religion from an Acquaintance with Christ's Person; and if they will own this a safe way, to build Religion on an Acquaintance with Christ's Person, they must own what I have now discoursed, which is much more agreeable to the *Person of Christ*, and the design of his appearing, and more easily and naturally deduced from it, than their own wild and fantastical conceits. If they do not like this, I must advise them

See Chap.
5. Sect. 2.

to quit this way, as that which will serve others as well as themselves, and let us all fetch our Religion from the plain Doctrines and Precepts of the Gospel of Christ, not from any pretended Personal Acquaintance with him.

S E C T IV.

How Men pervert the Scripture to make it comply with their fancies.

THERE is a very obvious Objection against this whole Discourse, the answering of which will further discover the ill consequences of framing such fanciful *Ideas* of Religion from an Acquaintance with Christ's Person; And that is this, that though these men deduce their Religion from an Acquaintance with Christ, yet there are no men that so abound in Scripture-proofs to confirm what they say, and therefore they do not lay the Foundation of their Religion on such uncertain conjectures; and the truth is, if you consult these mens Writings, you shall find their Books stuffed with Scripture, or if you talk with them, their whole discourse is little else but Scripture-phrase: but that *Reverend Doctor* confessed the plain Truth, that their Religion is wholly owing to *an acquaintance with the Person of Christ*, and could never have been *clearly and savingly* learnt from his *Gospel*, had they not first grown acquainted with his *Person*. And then it is no won-

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wonder if they can accommodate Scripture-expressions to their own dreams and fancies. For when mens fancies are so possess'd with Schemes and *Ideas* of Religion, whatever they look on appears of the same shape and colour, wherewith their Minds are already tinctured, like a man sick of the Jaundies, or that looks through a painted Glass, who seeth every thing of the same colour that his Eye or Glass gives it: All the Metaphors and Similitudes, and Allegories of Scripture, are easily applied to their purpose; and if any word sound like the tinkling of their own fancies, it is no less than a demonstration that that is the meaning of the Spirit of God; and every little shadow and appearance doth mightily confirm them in their pre-conceived opinions. As *Irenaeus* observes of the *Valentinians*, that they used one Artifice or other to adapt all the Speeches of our Saviour, and all the Allegories of Scripture *male composito phantasmati*, to the ill contrived figment of their own brain: and thus the minds of men are abused with words and phrases, and the Scripture is prest to serve every new-fangled conceit in Religion.

The wildest and most extravagant Opinions that were ever yet vented under the name of Religion, have pretended the authority of Scripture for their Patronage; though any unprejudiced man would wonder how the reading such places of Scripture should suggest such notions to them: but this is no wonder, when we consider that men first contrive their Religion (as these *Acquaintances* of Christ do) and possess their fancies throughly with their private opinions,

and then read the Scripture with no other design, than to find something there to stamp Divinity on their own conceits. For it is easie to pervert the plainest sense, and by the help of a strong imagination to make any thing of any thing; such men dote upon words and phrases, metaphors, and allusions, as best fitted for their purpose, they found their Religion on obscure Texts, or Mystical interpretations of plain Texts, and by the help of some arbitrary distinctions, and limitations, glosses, and paraphrases, by curtailing of Texts, or transplacing words and comma's, or separating a single sentence from the body of the discourse, make the Scripture speak their sense as plainly, as the Bells ring, what every boy will have them. Which is to deale with the Scripture (as *Ireneus* observes) as if a man should take a Picture of the *King* which consisted of an artificial composition of precious stones, and transplace all these stones into another form, as suppose of an Ape, and then should perswade silly people, that that was the Kings Picture: At this rate we may find the *Alcoran* in the Bible, as well as make so many Books so different, and contrary to each other, from the various composition of twenty four Letters. This is plain and evident at the first proposal to any intelligent Reader, but to put it out of all doubt, I shall give you some Instances of it, and show you how these *familiar acquaintances of Christ* (and who may better make bold with him than they) take the liberty to pervert his Gospel to serve their opinion.

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There are two ways of expounding Scripture in great vogue among them: First, by the sound and clink of words and phrases, which is all some men understand by *keeping a form of sound words*. Secondly, when this will not do, they reason about the sense of Scripture from their own pre-conceived notions and opinions, and prove that this must be the meaning of Scripture, because otherwise it is not reconcileable to their dreams, which is called expounding Scripture by the *Analogy of Faith*.

First, They expound Scripture by the sound of words and phrases, that is, if they can find any words in Scripture, which chime to the tune of their private conceits, without ever considering the use of the words in those places where they are found, they clap their own sense on them, and then they serve for very solid and substantial proofs. I shall give you several instances of this way.

Thus when men are possess'd with the fancy of *an Acquaintance with Christ's Person*, then to *know Christ*, can signifie nothing else but to know his Person, and all his Personal Excellencies and Beauties, Fulness and Preciousness, &c. And when Christ is said to *be made Wisdom to us*, this is a plain proof that we must learn all our spiritual Wisdom from an acquaintance with his Person. Though some duller men can understand no more by it, than the Wisdom of those Revelations Christ hath made of GOD's Will to the World.

Thus when men have first learnt from an acquaintance with Christ, to place all their hopes of

Salvation in a *Personal Union* with Christ, from whom they receive the free Communications of Pardon and Grace, Righteousness and Salvation, what more plain proof can any man who is resolved to believe this, desire of it, than *1 John 5. 12. He that hath the Son hath Life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life.* For what can *having the Son* signifie, but having an Interest in him, being made one with him; though some will be so perverse as to understand it of believing and obeying his Gospel; but the phrase of *Having the Son* confutes that dull and moral interpretation; especially when we remember, that it is called being *In Christ*, and *abiding in him*, which must signifie a very near Union between Christ's Person and us, such as there is between two things which are within one another, which makes all Christ ours, and us Christs.

Now it is self-evident, that before we can thus be united to Christ, we must go to him, and therefore *Faith*, which is the Instrument of this Union, is very luckily called *coming to Christ*: from whence it is very evident, that to believe in Christ is to go to him for Salvation, which Metaphors of coming and going, are a very intelligible explication of believing. But when the Soul is come to Christ, is this enough? No surely, the Soul then must *receive Christ*, as St. John tells us, *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God*, John i. 12. That Faith which serves us for Legs to go to Christ, must be a Hand to receive him: and to apply all his Merits, and Fulness and Righteousness to our Souls; and now when we have received him, we must

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mises afar off, and embraced them, Hebr. xi. 13.
And now we have Christ, we must trust and lean
upon him, as we are often commanded, to trust in
God, which signifies that Act of Faith, whereby
finding and feeling our own weakness, as unable to
support our selves, we do lean and rest on Christ; and
if leaning be not enough, we may make a little
more bold, and rowl on him, as appears from Psal.
xxxvii. 5. Rowl thy ways on the Lord, as the Ori-
ginal Gal signifies; which is that Act of Faith,
whereby we, being laden with sin, and seeking ease,
we at last discharge our Load, and cast it on Christ.
And this is plain from the phrase of believing In
Christ, and On him, 1 Pet. ii. 6. for what can that
signifie, but leaning and rowling on him, laying
and building our selves on him, as on a Foundation.
And now we have thus brought our Souls to
Christ, we must commit them to his trust, to
take charge of them, and save them, and if they
perish it will be his fault, and he must give account
of it. Thus St. Paul did, 2 Tim. i. 12. I know
whom I have believed, and I am perswaded that he
is able to keep that which I have committed to him a-
gainst that day. And now we must hide our selves
in Christ from the fierce wrath and displeasure of
God, as the Dove hides in the Rocks, Cant. ii. 14.
O my Dove in the Clefts of the Rocks: Christs wounds
are the clefts of the Rocks, where this believing Soul,
Christs Dove, hides it self. And besides this, A
Rock is a Skreen to shade off the heat. so Christ is
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Watson's
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called, Isa. xxxii. 2. *A shadow from the heat; he shades a poor Sinner from the scorchings of Gods wrath. And then we must fetch Comfort too from Christ, as Honey came out of the Rock; Deut. xxxii. 13. He made him suck Honey out of the Rock, and Oyl out of the flinty Rock: The Honey of the Promise, and the Oyl of Gladness comes out of this blessed Rock.*

Idem.

But this is not enough yet; for we must be *cloathed with the Righteousness of Christ. as appears from that expression that we must put on Christ, Rom. xiii. 14. Gal. iii. 27. which can signifie nothing else, but putting on Jesus Christ, that is his Righteousness, as men put on a Garment to cover their nakedness, and to adorn them. And therefore Christ is resembled to a beautiful Robe, Isa. lxi.*

Watson, ibidem.

10. He hath covered me with the Robe of Righteousness: His Righteousness is a lovely Robe, no Robe of Gold or Ermin, wherewith Kings are invested, is so honourable as this. In this Robe we shine as Angels in Gods Eye: The High Priests glorious Vestments, Exod. xxviii. 2. the Mytre, the Robe, the Ephod of Gold, and the Brest-plate of precious Stones, did all but serve to set out the beautiful Robes of Christ's Righteousness, wherewith a Believer is adorned: Thus if we would get the Blessing, we must go to God, as Jacob did, in the Robes of our Elder Brother, though I confess this Resemblance doth not very well please me; for though Jacob was a good man, yet this looks like a cunning trick, to rob his Elder Brother of the Blessing, and to cheat his blind Father; and men must not think that God is thus to be impos'd upon. But however that be, this is plain, that when we are thus

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thus united to Christ, and made one with him, then *all Christ is ours*, as the Apostle tells us, *All is yours, and you are Christs, and Christ is Gods*: The Merit of his Death is ours to free us from the guilt and punishment of our sins, and his Active Obedience to the Will of God, his Righteousness is ours for our Justification, as is plain, in that he is called the *Lord our Righteousness*, and is said to be made unto us of God *Righteousness*. And as J.O. well observes, we are reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, and saved by his Life, that is, by the *Righteousness of his Life*, which is made ours, *Rom. v. 10*. And now what better proof can you desire for all this, if you will be contented with express words? Though I am very much of the Doctors mind, that we could never have discovered these Mysteries clearly and savingly, had it not been for an Acquaintance with Christ's Person. No man would ever have dreamt of such interpretations of Scripture, who had not been prepossessed with the mysterious notion of a fanciful Union to Christ, and application of Christ to us: for here is no other proof of this, but words and phrases, separated from the body of the Text, and the design of the Discourse, and like straglers pick'd up, and lifted into the service of their Hypothesis.

For indeed the whole mystery of this, and a great deal more stuff of this nature, consists in wresting metaphorical and allusive expressions to a proper sense. When the Scripture describes the profession of Christianity, a sincere Belief and Obedience to the Gospel, by having Christ, and being in Christ, and coming to him, and receiving him;

him; these men expound these phrases to a proper and natural sense, to signifie I know not what unintelligible union, and spiritual progress & closure of the Soul with him; An union of Persons, instead of an agreement in Faith and Manners, As will appear more hereafter.

Thus when they talk of our spiritual impotency and inability to do any good thing (for after all the noise they make about our coming to Christ, they mean being carried thither with an omnipotent and irresistible power) they prove it wonderfully from *our being dead in trespasses and sins*, and therefore as a dead man can contribute nothing to his own Resurrection, no more can we towards our Conversion: which is true of natural Death, but will be hard to prove of a moral Death which consists in the prevalency of vicious Habits contracted by long custom (which was the case of the Heathens, whom the Apostle there speaks of) which do so enslave the Will, that it is very difficult, though not impossible, for such persons to return to the love and practice of Vertue: Another argument of the like nature is, that we are said to be *created to good works*, and to *become new Creatures*, and therefore can contribute no more to it, than we did to our first Creation: and that we are *born again*, which signifies, that we are wholly passive in it: which were true indeed, if our being *created to good works* did signifie the manner and method of our Conversion, and not the nature of the new Creature, which is the true meaning of it; that as in the first Creation we were created after the Image of God, so we are renewed after his Image

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when this way fails, they take another course with metaphors, and similitudes to make them serve their purpose, and that is, by considering all the properties and qualifications of those things Christ is compared to, and applying all, that will serve their turn, to Christ, without any regard to the end, for which they are used.

Thus the *Kingdom of Heaven*, that is the Gospel, is compared to a pearl of great price. *Mat. xiii. 46.* This Pearl in some mens Divinity signifies Christ, and the excellency of Christ appears plainly in this comparison. *For other Watson's Pearls add no real worth to them, that wear them, Christ's Loveliness but Christ this Illustrious Pearl doth, he makes us worthy with his worthiness.* Excellently turned to serve their purpose ; though all that the Parable means is, that we should be as ready to part with all for the belief and profession of the Gospel, as other men are, to sell all they have to purchase a pearl of great value.

Thus Christ was prefigured by Mannah, and this Mannah was of a circular figure, and this Circle was a figure of Christ's perfection ; this was meat cooked and drest in Heaven, God himself prepared it, and then served it in, thus Jesus Christ was prepared and set a part of his Father to the blessed work of Mediatorship. And Mannah suited it self to every ones Palate, thus Jesus Christ suits himself to every Christians condition ; he is full of quickning, strengthening, comforting virtue. That is, he is what every man fancies him to be, relishes

Idem, Christ's Loveliness

ound these phrases to a purpose to signify I know not what and spiritual progress & do him ; An union of Persons, ent in Faith and Manners, hereafter.

ny talk of our spiritual improvement to do any good thing (for we make about our coming being carried thither with sufficient power) they prove us being dead in trespasses as a dead man can contribute to Resurrection, no more conversion : which is true will be hard to prove of a man who sits in the prevalency of vice, seduced by long custom (which Heathens, whom the Apostles which do so enslave the Will, though not impossible, return to the love and practice of argument of the like nature to be created to good works, and therefore can do more, than we did to our first we are born again, which is wholly passive in it : which if our being created to good manner and method of a not the nature of the work the true meaning of it ; that on we were created after we are renewed after

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relishes according to the gusto of their own palates: what precious discoveries are here of Christ! and what irrefragable proofs for them! Thus to proceed, Christ was resembled to a Rock, 1 Cor. x. 3. *That Rock was Christ. And then he is a Rock for defence, and a Rock for offence, and a Rock for Comfort to screen us from the wrath of God, and to contain the honey of the promises.* Christ is resembled by the brazen Serpent: now brass being an inferiour metal signifies the meanness of his humanity, and it being a firm solid metal, it signifies the power of his Godhead, and though it shines, it doth not dazzle the eyes, and so signifies the glory of the Godhead veiled with the Manhood: thus the brazen Serpent was made like a Serpent, but was no real Serpent, so Christ was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, but was no Sinner. The serpent was lift up, so Christ was lift up in the acclamations of Angels, in the preaching of the Gospel, and upon the Cross, which the Pole was a Type of, and in our hearts by contemplating, admiring, loving him. And the Serpent was lift up to be lookt upon by the stung Israelites, which looking implied a secret hope, they had of Cure, so if we do but look on Christ fiducially, we shall be cured of our sins. Never was there so happy a man in expounding Types! Never was any brazen Serpent half so subtil!

Watson's
Spiritual
Vine.

Thus as the same Author tells us, *Christ is compared to a Vine, and that upon several accounts: The Vine of it self is weak, and must be supported and born up; so the Humane Nature of Christ, (which it seems is represented by the Vine) was of it self weak, and was fain to be supported and underpropt*
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by the Divine Nature. *The Vine grows in the Garden, not in the Forest; thus Christ grows in the Garden of the Church, he is not known among the Heathen: But I should have thought it more grand to have said that Christ this Spiritual Vine doth not find, but make a Garden where-ever he grows; since the Church owes its Being to him, not he to the Church. Thus the Vine communicates to the Branches, and Christ shoots up his Sap of Grace into Believers, who are the Branches of this Vine: And the Vine bath rare delicious Fruit growing on it; and thus the Promises are the Clusters of Grapes growing upon Christ the true Vine. And whereas other Vines bear but one sort of Fruit, this Spiritual Vine bears many, the Fruit of Justification, the Fruit of Sanctification, and the Fruit of Consolation, And the blood of Christ is the Wine of this Spiritual Vine, which cheers the heart of man, as other Wine doth, as he excellently proves from an old Latin Catch, *Curam metumq; juvat dulci lyao Solvere*, that is, Let us drink away care, &c. And now what fine work might a prophane wit make with Scripture, at this rate of expounding Metaphors?*

But still they have a fetch beyond all this, which consists in jumbling Metaphors, and Allegories, and Types, and Figures altogether, and proving one thing from another in a most wonderful manner.

As suppose a man would prove that Christ is infinitely beautiful and lovely, this is a most easie thing to do, if you take the right method: for first, He is lovely in his Titles, he is the Desire of all Nations, the Prince of Peace, the Holy One of Israel,

*Watson's
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Elect and Precious, these are most lovely Titles, which argue him to be very beautiful.

And then he is lovely in his Types too: *he was typified by Persons most lovely: by Moses, and David, and Solomon, who were all lovely for one thing or other, either upon account of natural beauty, or education, or office, or those great things done by them. But then he was typified by lovely things; As by the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, which was most lovely to behold; by the Manna, which was very lovely too, because it was of a circular figure, and extraordinary meat, and suited to every ones Palate; and by the Mercy-Seat, and brazen Serpent, and Noah's Ark: Who can forbear being smitten with so lovely a Person? Lovely as a Pillar of Cloud and Fire, lovely as Noah's Ark, lovely as any Serpent, yea as a brazen Serpent? But besides all these, Christ is resembled to a Rose, the Rose of Sharon, the Queen of Flowers, and how lovely is this Rose! To a Vine, the noblest of Plants, and O what lovely clusters grow upon this Vine! To a Corner-Stone, and O how lovely and precious is this Stone! To a Rock, and a River in a dry ground, and a rich Treasure, and a beautiful Robe, and all these are lovely, (and so should any thing have been, that had come in his way at that time) and who can doubt after all this, but that Christ is the chiefest of ten thousands, yea that he is altogether lovely?*

Thus if I had a mind to imitate these men, and prove that Christ is very powerful, as well as lovely, most of the same Types and Resemblances would serve the turn. For he was prefigured by Moses, who did wonders in *Ægypt*; He was typified by David, who killed Goliath; by Solomon,

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Thus Christ is very rich; for he is rich in wisdom, and rich in beauty, and rich in strength and power, rich in his Godhead, and rich in his Manhood; and then do but add Husband to all this, and he is a rich and a powerful and a beautiful Husband: thus Christ is lovely, because he is rich and powerful, and he is powerful, because he is rich and lovely, and rich because he is powerful and lovely: and how is it possible these men should want proofs for any thing. And is there any need now to prove, that all this is the work of fancy and imagination, that it is nothing but phrase, and religious tattle, the fruit of precarious *Hypotheses*, and of a pretended acquaintance with Christ's Person; for at this rate it were easie to make any thing of any thing, to find out some pretty words, and phrases, and allusions, types, or Metaphors, to countenance all the feats of Enthusiasm, and the more godly Romances of Popish Legends. He who would be an

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honest Reader of Books, who hath no mind to turn every thing into Burlesque, ought carefully to distinguish between proper and allusive or metaphorical expressions, to consider the use of words and phrases, and the great variety of Dialects, and the peculiar Moods of speaking in every language, and in every age, and to urge Metaphors no further than their first intention, without which we may deal by all Authors, as these men deal by the Scripture, make them speak non-sence, or (as they use to call them) venerable Mysteries, and overthrow and contradict their own design: And this is their first way of expounding, otherwise called adulterating and debauching Scripture, by the sound of words.

Secondly, When this will not do, then they argue and reason about the sense of Scripture from their own preconceived notions & opinions of Religion, pretend to prove their own Scheme and fancies of Religion from the Scripture, but in truth prove the sense of the Scripture by its agreement with their own opinions; which is such a trick, as the Papists have got, to prove the Authority of the Church from the Scripture, and the Scripture from the Church. I might give instances of this in abundance, but I shall mention only some few, lest I tire my self and my Reader.

Thus after all their talk of being *justified by the imputation of Christs Righteousness*, there are a great many places of Scripture, which expressly tell us, *that we are justified by Faith, have Remission of sins by Faith, have peace with God by Faith,*
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are sanctified by Faith, are the Sons of God by Faith, have eternal Life, and are saved by Faith: now how do you think shall all these Scriptures be reconciled to their notion of being justified by the imputation of Christs Righteousness: for Faith certainly is not the Righteousness of Christ in their notion of it: why this is plain at first sight to these acquaintances of Christ. For when Faith is said to justify and save, &c. we must not understand this absolutely, that is, we must not understand this of Faith, considered as Faith, but we must understand it relatively, that Faith justifies, as it brings us to Christ, and makes us one with him, by whom we are justified: Faith apprehends the Righteousness of Christ, and the Righteousness of Christ justifies: now this distinction is plainly owing to their preconceived opinions, without which no man could ever have stumbled on it: that when the Scripture saith, that Faith justifies, the meaning should be, that it justifies and saves instrumentally and relatively (words which the Scriptures are unacquainted with) that is, not as it is Faith, but as it apprehends the Righteousness of Christ; which in plain words signifies, that Faith does not justify, though the Scripture so often says it does.

But now the reason of this Interpretation is very plain; for should Faith justify, as our own Act, (that is, as Faith) it would be as bad as good works, and as perfectly irreconcilable with the free Grace of God: For had Justification been promised to any thing wrought in us, or done by us, it had been of Desert, not of Grace, of Wages, not of Mercy: if God had promised Justification

fication upon any work of ours, had said, we must bring so much Humiliation; so much Repentance, so much breaking of Spirit, so much Grace, so many Prayers, Alms-deeds, (or so much Faith as our own Act) and then we should be justified, it would not have been of Grace, not of free Mercy; though modest men, who are not so apt to dream of meriting by every thing they do, would have thought, that free Grace and Faith might have been easily reconciled, though Faith had justified, as our own Act, since the reward and recompence does so infinitely exceed the work that there can be no suspicion of merit, and where there is no merit, the reward is of Grace, and not of debt, whatever the condition of the promise be.

Watson's
Mystery of
the Lords
Supper, p.
64.

But this is past all doubt, when it is confirmed by a metaphor or two, of which there is great variety, some more apt than others: as for instance: *the vertue is not in Faith but in Christ*, as appears in this, *a Ring, which hath a precious stone in it, which will staunch Blood, we say the Ring stauncheth Blood, but the vertue doth not barely lye in the Ring, but in the Stone in the Ring: so Faith is the Ring, Christ the precious Stone, all that Faith does, is to bring home Christs merits to the Soul, and so it justifies: so that if you can but find out an improper and absurd form of speech in use among the vulgar, or if you can but invent one, as this Gentleman does, for I never met with this before; it is a sufficient reason to expound Scripture as improperly, as unlearned men talk or think; or if you can but fancy Faith a Ring, and Christ a precious*

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ous Stone, it is enough to answer all those places of Scripture, which speak of that legal and meritorious way of Justification by Faith: And thus Faith justifies, as it is a *receptive Grace*: it is the receiving the Gold, that enriches, so Faith receiving of Christs merits, and filling the Soul with all the fulness of God, must needs be an enriching Grace: *In the Body there are Veins, that suck the nourishment that comes into the Stomach, and turns it into Blood and Spirits; Faith is such a sucking Vein, that it draws vertue from Christ, and therefore is called a precious Faith*: Is not this very plain now to him who understands the nature of our Union to Christ, which is like that of the Members of a natural Body, and that we are saved by Christ, just as the Body is nourished by the Stomach?

Idemp. 65.

And now to make all clear, we may give a Philosophical account, why God chose Faith to be the Instrument of our Justification, *because it is an humble Grace, and gives the glory of all to free Grace*. If Repentance should fetch Justification from Christ, a man would be ready to say, *this was for my tears*, (strange deserving Creatures these, who can dream of meriting Heaven with a few tears) *but Faith is humble, it is an empty hand, and what merit can there be in that? doth a poor mans reaching out his hand merit an Alms?* (yes, just as much as a few tears merit Heaven) *Faith is only a golden Bucket, that draws Water out of the Well of Life*; But why may not those, who are so apt to be conceited of merit, grow as proud, that they have a *golden Bucket*, as if the whole Well were their own.

Ibidem.

Thus you see, how these men deal with the Scripture, and *poor humble Faith*, make what they please of them, to fit them to their purpose; that Faith is sometimes feet to go to Christ, sometimes a Hand to receive him, a mouth to feed on him, an eye to look fiducially on him, a ring to hold this precious stone, a vein to suck justification out of the spiritual Stomach (which by the way is a very new conceit; for though Christ is called the Head, I never before read that he was the Stomach) a Bucket to draw Water out of this *Well, Christ*, though in this they are very civil to Faith, in making it a Golden Bucket; whereas at other times they tell us, that Faith may be a sore and blear-eyed *Leah*, a shaking and Palsie Hand, weak and bending Legs, and have all the Infirmities that may be, and be never the worse neither as to the purpose of Justification; so that Faith had need be a very *humble Grace*, else it would take such language very ill from them.

Thus to give you but one instance more; when these men are prest with those Scriptures that urge the necessity of good works and a holy life: *that without Holiness no man shall see God; that the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men.* That our acceptation with God depends upon a holy and vertuous Life: *that God is no respecter of persons, but in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness is accepted with him. That except our Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees* (those immoral Hypocrites who plac't all their Righteous-

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Righteousness in observing the Ceremonies of the Law without the purity of their hearts and lives) *we shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. That he who breaks one of the least of these Commandments, and teacheth men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven* (that is, shall have no inheritance there) *and he that doth, and teacheth them, shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven*, that is, shall be greatly rewarded, with many more of the like nature, which assert the absolute necessity of a holy life, and keeping the Commandments of God, to entitle us to his love and favour, and the rewards of the next life; which perfectly overthrow their fundamental notion of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ; the merits of whose death they say free us from the guilt of sin, and that punishment which is due to it, make us as perfectly innocent, as if we had never offended, and the Righteousness of his life imputed to us makes us righteous, so as to deserve a reward: gives us an actual title to glory: Now any one, who is not mightily acquainted with the Person of Christ, would think it a very hard task to reconcile this Doctrine of Justification by the imputation of Christs Righteousness without any thing of our own, with the necessity of a holy life, which the Scripture doth so expressly assert. But these men defie you, if you charge them with destroying the necessity of a holy life: And I wish with all my heart, that whatever the consequence of their Doctrines is, it may have no bad influence upon their lives.

Dr. Owens
Communi-
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Ch. 8.

For they tell us, *that this universal obedience and good works* (a very suspicious word, which methinks these men should be afraid to name) *are indispensably necessary from the Sovereign appointment and will of God, this is the Will of God, even our Sanctification; It is the Will of the Father, and it is the Will of the Son, I have ordained you, that you bring forth fruit, John 15. 16. and the appointment of the Holy Ghost. And then Holiness is one eminent and special end of the peculiar dispensation of Father, Son and Spirit, in the business of exalting the Glory of God in our Salvation; It is the end of the Fathers electing Love, he hath chosen us, that we should be holy, Eph. 1. 4. the end of the Sons redeeming love, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purifie to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. Titus 2. 14. and of the Spirits sanctifying love, as any one would easily ghes.*

It is necessary to the Glory of God, to the Glory of the Father, to the Glory of the Son, and to the Glory of the Holy Ghost, whose Temple we are: and are not these men now mightily injured in being charged with denying the necessity of a Holy Life, who make it necessary upon so many accounts? Is it not great pity, they should be so abused? But the truth is, all this is not one syllable to the purpose; for the question was about its necessity to Salvation, and if we be justified and saved without it, all this cannot prove any necessary obligation on us to the practice of it: God hath appointed and commanded obedience, but where is the sanction of this Law, will he damn those who do not obey, for

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for their Disobedience? And will he save and reward those who do obey for their Obedience? Not a word of this; for this destroys our Justification by the Righteousness of Christ *only*: And if after all these Commands, God hath left it indifferent, whether we obey or not, I hope such Commands cannot make Obedience necessary.

The Father hath elected us to be holy, and the Son redeemed us to be holy: but will the Father elect and the Son redeem none but those who are holy, and reject and reprobate all others? Doth this Election and Redemption suppose Holiness in us, or is it without any regard to it? For if we be elected and redeemed without any regard to our being holy, our Election and Redemption is secure, whether we be holy or not; and so this cannot make Holiness necessary on our parts, though it may be necessary on Gods part to make us holy, but that is not our care.

Obedience and a holy Life is *for the glory of the Father, the Son, and holy Spirit*: How so? when the necessity of Holiness is so destructive to free Grace, which is the onely glory God designs to advance by Christ. If this will not do, yet *Holiness is necessary to our Honour, for it makes us like to God*: Prophane men that they are! as if the perfect Righteousness of Christ, his beautiful Robes, were not much more for our Honour, and did not make us more like to God than the Rags and Patches of our own Righteousness: However, if men prefer their Lusts and Interests before their Honour, the necessity of Holiness ceases.

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p. 113.

ibidem.
p. 119.

*But it is for Peace. What Peace I pray you? Peace of Conscience? Why then must we at last fetch our Peace and Security from our own Duties and Graces? Is not this to renounce Christ? Miserable men that we are! must we then set about correcting our Lives, amending our Ways, performing Duties required, and so follow after Righteousness according to the Prescript of the Law? Why this is the course, wherein many men continue long with much perplexity, sometimes hoping, oftner fearing, sometimes ready to give quite over, sometimes vowing to continue (their Consciences being no ways satisfied, nor Righteousness in any measure obtained) all their days; After they have tired themselves perhaps in the largeness of their ways, they come at length with fear and trembling and disappointment to the conclusion of the Apostle, By the Works of the Law no man is justified; and with David cry, That if God marks what is done amiss, there is no standing before him. And is this the way in which we must seek for Peace? Is this the way to enjoy Communion with God by our own Righteousness? Why doth not all our Wisdom of walking with God consist in our Acquaintance with Christ? God is light and in him is no darkness at all, we are darkness, and in us no light at all. He is Life, a living God, we are dead, dead Sinners, dead in trespasses and sins. He is Holiness, and glorious in it, we wholly defiled, an abominable thing. He is Love, we full of hatred, hating and being hated. Surely this is no foundation of agreement, or upon that of walking (that is, of Communion) together: nothing can be more remote than this frame from such a Condition. The Foundation then of this Peace (that is, of Agree-
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ment and Communion with God) is laid in Christ, hid in Christ; He, saith the Apostle, is our Peace; he hath made peace for us; he is the new and living Way into the Holy of Holies. I am the Way, (saith Christ) and no man cometh to the Father but by me: He is the Medium of all Communication between God and us; in him we meet, in him we walk. So that if this Gentlemans memory had not failed him, he would never have told us in the 8 Chap. that Holiness is necessary to our Peace and Communion with God, when a little before he had disclaimed this, as wholly useless to that purpose.

But however, Holiness is very useful to all the purposes of Life: that it may be, and not necessary to Salvation. It serves for the conviction of the Enemies of God: How so? When it is not essentially necessary to his Friends: And it is for the Conversion of others: Why so? when men may be converted without it. It keeps the Judgments of God from other men, as Ten good men would have preserved Sodom: But why cannot the Righteousness of Christ do this more effectually than the Holiness of Men? But, It is necessary in respect of the state and condition of Justified Persons: for they are accepted and received into Friendship with an holy God, a God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, &c. and therefore they must cleanse and purifie themselves: What need of this? When they are clothed with the Robes of Christs Righteousness, which is the only Foundation of our Communion with God, as you heard before.

But however, Holiness is necessary with respect to sanctification. We have in us a New Creature, 2 Cor.

2 Cor. v. 17. *this New Creature is fed, cherish'd, nourish'd, kept alive, by the fruits of Holiness; to what end hath God given us new Hearts and new Natures? Is it that we should kill them, stifle the Creature that is found in us, in the Womb? That we should give him to the old man to be devoured?* The phrase of this is admirable, and the reasoning unanswerable: for if men be new Creatures, they will certainly live new lives; and this makes Holiness absolutely necessary by the same reason that every thing necessarily is, what it is, when it is; but still we enquire after a necessary Obligation to the practice of Holiness, and that we cannot discover yet.

Well! *But Holiness is necessary as the means to the end.* This indeed is something to the purpose, but let us hear how: *Though it be neither the cause, matter, nor condition of our Justification, (mark the Hypothesis) yet it is the way appointed of God for us to walk in for the obtaining Salvation; and therefore he that hath hope of Eternal Life, purifies himself as he is pure; and none shall ever come to the end, who walketh not in the way; for without Holiness it is impossible to see God.* This I confess is all pertinent, and home to the purpose, but yet there are two little faults in it; that it contradicts it self, and overthrows their darling Opinions, which I can very well pardon, if he can: What? the necessary Way to Eternal Life, and yet neither the Cause, Matter, nor Condition of our Justification, which alone gives us a Title to Eternal Life? At least you might allow the Way to Eternal Life to be the *causa sine qua non*, without which we shall never get thither; and that

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that in spight of all your distinctions will entitle it to the nature of a condition. But not to dispute about words, I am content it should only be a necessary way to Eternal Life: but what becomes of Christ then? who is the *only* way the truth and the life: is not the righteousness of Christ able to save us without an additional righteousness of our own? doth the Active and Passive Righteousness of Christ both free us from guilt and punishment, and give us an actual right and title to glory? and yet can we not be saved without walking in the ways of holiness? what becomes of free Grace then? is not this to eke out the righteousness of Christ with our own? to make Christ our justifier, and our works our Saviour?

Thus you see, how men wrest and pervert the Scripture to make it speak their sense, and justify their darling opinions and fancies, though not always with the same success; for some truths are so plain and stubborn, that they will not bend, but must be broke into the most palpable absurdities and contradictions, before they can be fitted to their opinions, and then they agree like new Cloath in an old Garment, which makes the rent the wider.

It were easie to produce many more instances of this nature, but this is enough to show you how dangerous it is to pre-possess our fancies with some arbitrary notions in Religion, which naturally force men to pervert the Scriptures to make them speak the Orthodox language. To this we owe all those nice and subtle distinctions, which constitute the body of Systematical Divinity,

The Conclusion of this Chapter.

Divinity, which commonly have no other design, than to evade the force of Scripture, or to bribe it to speak on their side. The Authority of Scripture is sacred and inviolable, and it is dangerous to call that into question, whatever acquaintance men have with the Person of Christ; but as Mr. *Chillingworth* observes of the Church of Rome, *That to establish her Tyranny over mens Consciences, she need not either abolish or corrupt the Holy Scripture, (which in regard of the numerous multitude of Copies dispersed through all places, translated into almost all Languages, guarded with all solicitous Care and Industry, had been an impossible attempt) but the more expedite way, and therefore the more likely to be successful, was to gain the opinion and esteem of the Publick and authorized Interpreter of them, and the Authority of adding to them what Doctrines she pleased, under the Title of Traditions or Definitions.* Thus though their fancies and the Scripture agree no better than the Church of Rome and the Scripture do, yet they may be both retained, so their Opinions may but expound the Scriptures, and add such Limitations, Distinctions, Glosses, &c. as are necessary to make them Orthodox.

The sum of all is, That to know Christ, is not to be thus acquainted with his Person, but to understand his Gospel in its full latitude and extent; It is not the Person, but the Gospel of Christ, which is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, *which directs us in the true Way to Life and Happiness.* Which instructs us in our Duty, and furnishes us with all the Motives and Arguments to a good Life, and gives us the greatest Assurance of our Reward.

The Conclusion
 Reward. This Acquaintance which these men prefer to Fancy, and teaches it undermines the foundation of the Gospel, makes men incited of their own endless Talkers, and Mankind: every Body these notions, learn his Teachers, as if the and of the Mystery of Laws of Christ will is moral and legal Precept whole some and favorable Romantick Descriptions, Fulness and Promise hope hereafter they will we are not such Strangers, but have a great to be so rude and unbold with his Person are too honest to admit Dreams and fruitless. The wildness and makes me so much the and the Honesty of our sick Catechism hath been threats and delusions children with whole some taught them a Religion hath instructed them in a solemn Vow, and then them to a virtuous Life Apostles Creed, which

Reward. This Acquaintance with Christ's Person which these men pretend to, is onely a work of Fancy, and teaches men the Arts of Hypocrisie, it undermines the fundamental design of the Gospel, makes men incurably ignorant, and yet conceited of their own Knowledge, impertinent and endless Talkers, and insolent Censurers of all Mankind: every Boy, who is acquainted with these notions, learns to despise the ignorance of his Teachers, as if they knew nothing of Christ, and of the Mystery of the Gospel; and now the Laws of Christ will not down with them, this is moral and legal Preaching; nothing appears wholesome and savoury to their Palates, but some Romantick Descriptions of the Beauty, Loveliness, Fulness and Preciousness of Christ. But I hope hereafter they will see reason to believe, that we are not such Strangers to Christ, as they imagine, but have a greater Reverence for him, than to be so rude and unmannerly, than to make so bold with his Person, and with his Laws; and are too honest to abuse the People with such Dreams and fruitless Speculations.

The wildness and distraction of these men, makes me so much the more admire the Wisdom and the Honesty of our Church, who in her publick Catechism hath been careful to prevent these cheats and delusions of fancy: feeds her Children with wholesome and substantial food, hath taught them a Religion without Art or Subtilty, hath instructed them in the nature of their Baptismal Vow, and those Obligations it lays on them to a vertuous Life: hath taught them the Apostles Creed, which contains those great and essential

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essential Articles of Religion, which are the necessary Principles of Action: hath given them a plain and easie Explication of the Ten Commandments, which are the Rules of a good Life: hath taught them to pray to God, and what the true design of our Saviours Institution is, without filling their heads with notions and artificial Theories of Religion, which serve only to make them giddy with a vain conceit of Knowledge, to talk ill, and to live worse.

And now it is time to dismiss these Acquaintances of Christ, and if nothing will make them wiser, to leave them to their own Dreams and Dotage; onely advising them, that however they may indulge themselves in these choice Speculations, they would have a care of pretending any acquaintance with Christ's Person for the neglect or contempt of his Laws, lest they fare as ill as another of his Acquaintance did, *Luke xix. 21.* who argued from the severity of his temper and disposition, to apologize for his own sloth and idleness: *For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man, who takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.* But it seems, as great an acquaintance as he was, he drew a very false conclusion, when he hid his Talent in a Napkin, as his Lord convinc'd him to his cost: And it will be the same case, though we argue from other Principles, not from the Severity, but from the Fondness and Indulgence of our Saviour, from the Merits of his Death, or the Imputation of his Righteousness: The safest way is to do what he bids us, lest he be too hard for us at Reasoning, and making *Hypotheses.*

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But yet there is one thing more, which I must take notice of: That as when the Scripture speaks of the knowledge of Christ, it includes not only the speculative part of knowledge, which consists in true Notions and Opinions, but the virtue and efficacy of this Knowledge, in the Government of our Lives, in transforming us into the Likeness of our Lord and Saviour, and in making us obedient to his Laws; without which all our Knowledge is but like a curious piece of Painting, an accurate Image and Picture, without Life or Sense: so these men talk also of an experimental Knowledge of Christ; the meaning of which is, that this Acquaintance with the Person of Christ warms and heats their Fancies, and moves their Passions; sometimes they find great breakings of Heart, they melt and dissolve into tears for their sins, when they remember what their Lord suffer'd for them, they see him hang upon the Cross, and have all his Agonies and dying Groans in their Ears; and then they curse their Sins that nailed him there, and tremble at the thoughts of the *naturalness of Gods Vindictive Justice to him*: and feel all the horrors and agonies of damned Spirits: at other times they are mightily ravish'd with his Love, and charm'd and captivated with his Beauty: Fancy they have him in their Arms in the closest Embraces; *they hear Christ call them by name, and say to them as he did to that Woman in the Gospel, Thy sins are forgiven thee.* They are refresh'd and ravish'd with his Comforts, and the sweet Caresses of his Love: they see Christ adorning them with the beautiful Robes of his Righteousness, own-

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ing them for his dearest Spouse, and expressing all Conjugal Affections to them; now they taste and relish the sweetness of Christ, which other men onely talk of, and have an experimental sense of his Fulness to supply their Wants, of his Love in chearing their Souls, of his Beauty in adorning them, they are all Life and Spirit, which is a plain Argument, that now Christ hath taken up his abode with them.

This will fall under consideration in what follows; at present I shall only say this; that all this may be no more than the working of a warm and enthusiastick Fancy, and no man ought to think himself ever the more experimentally acquainted with Christ, unless he find the power of it in governing his Life: It is very desirable to have always such a quick and vigorous sense of the love of our dying Lord, as may constrain us to live to him, who died for us; but without this we are still ignorant of him, however we may be transported with these frantick Raptures and Extasies of Love and Joy.

NExt to the Knowledge of Christ, and Communion with him, and the Sacraments which represent it, are the most precious and precious conclusions which the Doctrines and Principles of the Christian Religion lead to. Therefore it is of great importance, and to examine the nature of our Union with him; for the Sacrament of the Eucharist is a representation of the relation between Christ and his Church, expressed by an Union, in Christ, and abiding in him.

I. And first, I observe that the Scriptures which describe the Relation between Christ and Christians, the Christian Church, not only as a whole, but as a particular Christian is Head of his Church, and as a particular Christian is only a Member in this

CHAP. IV.

Of our Union to Christ, and Communion with him.

SECT. I.

NEXT to the Knowledge of Christ, there is not a greater Mystery than *our Union to him, and Communion with him*; on which, as these men represent it, are built all those wild and fanciful conclusions which so directly oppose both the Doctrines and Practice of Christianity. And therefore it is of great concernment to state this matter, and to examine what is meant in Scripture by our Union to Christ, and Communion with him; for the Scripture does mention such a relation between Christ and Christians, as may be exprest by an Union, and those phrases of *being in Christ*, and *abiding in him*, can signifie no less.

I. And first, I observe, that those Metaphors, which describe the Relation and Union betwixt Christ and Christians, do primarily refer to the Christian Church, not to every individual Christian. Thus Christ is called *a Head*, but he is the Head of his Church, which is his Body, as a Husband is the Head of the Wife, *Eph. v. 23, 24*. No particular Christian is the Body of Christ, but only a Member in this Body. Christ is called a

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Husband, but then the whole Church or Society of Christians, not every particular Christian is his Spouse, as St. Paul tells the Church of Corinth, 2 Cor. xi. 2. *For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ.* Christ is a Shepherd, and the Christian Church is his flock, John x. For the relation between Shepherd and Sheep, doth primarily concern the whole Flock: Christ is the Rock upon which his Church is built, the chief Corner-Stone, and the Christian Church a Holy Temple: So that all these Metaphors in their first and most proper use refer to the whole Society of Christians, and are designed to represent the Union between Christ and his Church.

- II. Secondly, I observe further, that the Union of particular Christians to Christ, is by means of their Union to the Christian Church: the Church is *the Body of Christ*, and every Christian by being united to this Body, becomes a Member of Christ, as the Apostle tells the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xii. 27. *Now you are the Body of Christ, and Members in particular.* The Church is the *Temple of God*, built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief Corner-Stone, and every Christian is a *lively Stone in this spiritual Building*: The Church is *Christ's Flock*, and every Christian who is of this Fold, is one of *Christ's Sheep*. The Church is *Christ's Spouse*, and every Christian is a Member of that Society which Christ owns for his Spouse: but every Christian is not *Christ's Spouse*: He is a great Enemy to Polygamy, and hath but one Spouse, as he hath but

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but one Body and one Church ; which quite spoils the prettiness and fantastical Wit of a late *Exhortation to young Women to choose Christ for their Husband, because he is rich, and beautiful, and kind, and hath all the properties of an excellent Husband; which would have sounded much better in a Popish Nunnery, than among such Pretenders to Reformation : for this is the great Art, whereby those cunning Priests wheedle silly Girles into a profession of perpetual Virginity, by perswading them that in so doing they are married to Christ. And to give every one their due, the Papists are the most generous sort of Suiters for Christ, for they perswade them to forsake all other Husbands for Christ, which is more honourable and meritorious.*

Thus to proceed, Christ is called the Vine, and Christians the Branches in that Vine, *John xv.* which must be expounded to the same sence with what goes before : for where Christ speaking of himself saith, *I am the true Vine*, the meaning is, that Church which is founded on the belief of my Gospel, is the true Vine : I, signifies Christ together with his Church which is his Body : upon which account the Church is elsewhere called Christ, as I observed above ; and my Reasons for this Exposition are these :

First, Because the Jewish Church is frequently in the Old Testament compared to a Vine, *Isa.v. Jer.ii.21. Hos.x.1.* Now a Vine being the Metaphor whereby the Church useth to be described, we cannot reasonably understand it otherwise here ; *I am the true Vine*, that is the Church, which is founded on the belief of my Gospel, is

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the only true Church, which God now owns; He having rejected the *Jewish Synagogue*, as proving a *degenerate Vine*. Especially when we consider, that Christ himself applies the Parable of the Vineyard to the State of the Gospel, *Matth. xxi. 33, &c.* and the Christian Church is called an *Olive Tree*, and the Members of it expressly called *Branches*, *Rom. xi. 17, 18.* which Metaphor hath the very same nature and signification *with the Vine and Branches*.

Secondly, Because God is called the Husbandman, who takes care to dress this Vine, which cannot be understood of Christ, but of the Church, which is therefore called *God's Husbandry*.

Thirdly, Christ speaks of such *Branches in him* as bear no fruit; now there can be no such Branches in the *Person of Christ*; for our very *Union to his Person* (as those men acknowledge, who talk of such an *Union of Persons between Christ and Believers*) will make us fruitful: and therefore being *in him*, can signifie no more than being *Members of his visible Church*, which is made up of Hypocrites, as well as sincere Christians.

But fourthly, To confirm all this, and to prevent Objections, it is evident from this very Chapter, that when Christ speaks in the first Person, *I*, and *In me*, he cannot mean this of his own Person, but of his Church, Doctrine, and Religion, according as the circumstances of the place require: thus in the fifth Vers. *I am the true Vine, ye are the Branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.* I would willingly learn

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learn what sense can be made of this, if we understand it of the *Person of Christ*: for it is not very intelligible how we can *be* or *abide* in the *Person of Christ*; and it is more unintelligible still, how *we* can be in the *Person of Christ*, and the *Person of Christ* at the *same time be in us*, which is a new Piece of Philosophy, called Penetration of Dimensions; and that our fruitfulness should depend upon such an *Union to the Person of Christ*, is as hard to my Understanding, as all the rest.

But if by *He that abideth in me*, we understand the *Christian Church*, i. e. he who makes a publick and visible profession of Faith *in me*, and continues in Society with those who do so; and by *I in him*, the *Christian Doctrine*, both the Sense and Reason of it is very evident: the sense is this; That Church which owns my Doctrine and Religion, is the *true Vine*, and all you who make a Publick Profession of Faith *in me*, (of a belief of my Gospel) and live in Communion with one another, are the *Branches* in this Vine; and whoever of you continue steadfast in this Profession and Communion, and do not only make a visible profession of Faith in me, but suffer my Doctrine and Precepts to dwell and abide in you, to govern your Will and Affections, and to direct your Conversation in the World, all such of you will be very fruitful in good Works, for without such a sincere and hearty belief of my Gospel, it is impossible you should do any thing that is good.

So that to *abide in Christ*, is to make a publick and visible Profession of Faith in Christ, to be the Members of his visible Church; but because ma-

ny are so, who do not much credit their Profession (being Branches in him that bear not fruit) hence to distinguish all true Christians from such Hypocritical Professors, he adds, *And I in you*, that is, my words abide in you, *Verf. 7.* if my Doctrines and Precepts take fast hold of your Wills and Affections, they will make you fruitful in good Works.

Thus you see, that the Union of particular Christians to Christ, consists in their Union to the Christian Church: And hence it is, that the Ancient Fathers interpret all those Metaphors, which decipher the *Union between Christ and Christians*, to signify the *entire Love and Unity of Christians among themselves*. Thus St. Chrysostom expounds *Ephes. ii. 19, 20, 21.* where the Apostle speaks of *that spiritual Building, which is erected on the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief Corner-Stone*, to signify the Unity of the Church in all Ages; that both the Jewish and Christian Church are united in Christ, as the several parts of the Building are kept together by the Corner-Stone; and St. Ambrose to the same purpose tells us, *Duos populos in se suscepit Salvator, & fecit unum in Domino, sicut & lapis angularis duos parietes continet in unitate domus firmatos.* i. e. *That Christ united two People in himself, (the Jew and Gentile) and made them one in the Lord, as the Corner-Stone unites two Walls in a Building, and makes it but one House.* Which is the plain design of the place to prove that Christ hath taken away the enmity and distance which was between the Jew and Gentile, and hath reconciled them both to God in one body by the Cross, *v. 16.*

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Thus St. Chrysoft. observes on 1 Cor. 3. 9. that the Apostle to dissuade them from Schisms and Factions tells them, θεὸς οἰκοδομὴ ἐστὶ, εἰ γὰρ οἰκοδομὴ ἐστὶ. ὃ καὶ δὲσπᾶσθαι &c. *That they were Gods building, and if they were Gods building, they must not be torn asunder, for then they are no longer a Building; and if they were Gods Husbandry, they must not be divided from each other, but they must be one enclosure, hedged and walled in by Unity and Agreement.* And adds, *let us therefore be built on Christ, and cleave to him as to a foundation, and as a branch to the Vine; that there may be no distance between Christ and us to interrupt this Union; for if there be, we immediately perish; for the branch draws nourishment and fatness from the Vine by its Union to it, and the building stands firm by the adhesion of its parts.* Which plainly signifies, that our Union to Christ consists in our Union to the Christian Church, and when we divide and separate from the Church, we are broken off from Christ, as a branch is from the Vine; we are then like a building, whose stones fall asunder, and destroy the whole fabric.

Thus the same Father argues on John 14. 21. to persuade Christians to Peace and Unity: καὶ γὰρ διὰ πολλῶν ἡμᾶς ὑποδειγμάτων ἐν οἱ; &c. *for he (Christ) unites us to each other by many examples and patterns of the closest Union; He is the Head, and we the body, and the whole body by the Union of its several parts must be firmly united to the head; He is the foundation, we the building; He the Vine, we the branches; He the Husband, we his Spouse; He the Shepherd, we his Sheep; He*
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*the way, we those who are to walk in that way; we are a spiritual Temple, and He it is who dwells in us; He is the first born, we his Brethren; He the Heir, we fellow Heirs with him; He the life, we those who live by him; He the Resurrection, we those who rise with him; He the Light, and we are all enlightened by him; ταῦτα πάντα ἐν ὧσι ἐμ-
φαίνει, καὶ ὁδὸν μέσον καὶ ὁδὸν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ εἶναι ὁδὸν τὸ
μικρότατον. All these metaphors describe the near-
est and closest Union of Christians to each other,
and of all to Christ, which will not admit of the least
distance and separation: so that according to the
sense of this Holy man, particular Christians are
united to Christ by means of their Union to the
Christian Church, otherwise I cannot understand
how our Union to Christ can be an argument to
Unity and Concord among our selves, if we
are immediately united to the Person of Christ,
without being first united to his Church. Which
I wish those men would seriously consider, who
boast so much of their Union to Christ, and yet
rend his Church into a thousand little factions,
tear the members of his body from each other,
and yet pretend to be united to the head, make
new enclosures in the Husbandry, and Vineyard
of God, and when Christ hath broken down
the middle Wall of Partition, and made Jews
and Gentiles but one Church, do now erect
more partition Walls in the Christian, than ever
were in the Jewish Temple.*

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confirmation of this notion, that the Union of
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Sacraments our Saviour hath instituted, as *Symbols of our Union with him*, are a plain demonstration of it: Our first undertaking of Christianity is represented in our *Baptism*, wherein we make a publick profession of our Faith in Christ; and it is sufficiently known, that Baptism is the *Sacrament of our admission into the Christian Church*; and if any one should deny this we have the authority of *S. Paul* for the proof of it, *1 Cor. 12. 13.* *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body*; In which the Apostle seems to allude to Baptism, which confers the same holy Spirit on us all, and thereby makes us all members of that *one body* of Christ, which is his Church; but more expressly in *Eph. 4. 4, 5.* *There is one body and one spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism*; that is, the Christian Baptism is but one, and is a Sacrament of Union, making us all the members of that one body of Christ; this is called being *baptized into Christ*, i. e. admitted into the Christian Church by a publick profession of our Faith in Christ.

Thus the *Lords Supper* is a Sacrament of Union, and signifies that near Conjunction between Christ and the *Christian Church*, and the mutual fellowship of one Christian with another: hence the Apostle calls the *Cup of Blessing* the *Communion of the Blood of Christ*, and the *Bread* the *Communion of the Body of Christ*; for *we being many are one Bread and one Body* (one Body represented by this one Bread) *for we are all partakers of that one Bread.* *1 Cor. 10. 16, 17.*

For the Intention of our Lord and Saviour in what he did and suffer'd for us was, not merely to

to reform and save some single persons but, to erect a Church, and to combine all his Disciples into a publick society, to unite them by holy Mysteries, and to engage them to a mutual discharge of all Christian offices, whereby the *whole body may edifie it self in love*; and therefore our Saviour does not own any relation to particular men, as such, but as they are members of his body, for he is the *Saviour of the body*, and *redeemed his Church with his own Blood*.

Hence St. *John* tells us in his first Ep. ch. 1. ver. 3. *That which we have seen and heard* (the whole Doctrine and History of the Gospel) *declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*. First, that ye may have fellowship with us, become members of the *Church of Christ*, by which means you have fellowship and communion with God and Christ.

And therefore those publick censures, whereby rotten or dead members are cut off from the body of Christ, consist in casting such persons out of the society of Christian people, in debarring them from the communion of Prayers and Sacraments, and all religious offices, which is a plain demonstration, that our Union to Christ is not an Union to his *Person* (of which more hereafter) but consists in a sincere and spiritual communion with the *Christian Church*; otherwise this external communion with the Church could be no visible signification of our Union to Christ, nor could our excision from the visible Church signify our separation from him.

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But thirdly, It will be requisite now to explain more particularly the nature of this Union between Christ and the Christian Church, which is not a natural but a *political* Union, that is such an Union as is between a *Prince* and his *Subjects*: Christ is a *spiritual King*, and all Christians are his *Subjects*, and our Union to Christ consists in our belief of his Revelations, obedience to his Laws, and subjection to his Authority: Hence our Saviour tells the Jews, *If ye continue in my words, then are ye my Disciples indeed*, John 8. 31. which is the same thing *with being in him*: and by *keeping his Commandments we abide in his love*, Joh. 15. 10. & 14. 21. and *to have his word abide in us* is a description of the closest and firmest Union to him, John 15. 7. As obedience to our Prince is the strongest bond of a political Union, which is dissolved and broken by disobedience and rebellion. Thus our Saviour calls himself a *Shepherd* and Christians his *Sheep*, Joh. 10. to signify that Authority he hath over his Church, which bears some Analogy to the Government of a *Shepherd*, which is oft-times used as a name of Power and Authority; as God is styled the *Shepherd of Israel*, Psalm 80. 1. and *Kings* are frequently called *Shepherds*, both by prophane and sacred Writers. Though this name is most commonly given to *Prophets*, who feed and instruct the Church, which includes Power and Authority; and so does very properly belong to our Saviour, who erected this spiritual Kingdom on the Foundation of his Doctrine and Laws, and by the exercise of his Prophetical Office: for which reason he

is

Of our Union to Christ,

is called the *Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls*.

Thus he is called a *Head* and the Church his *Body*, a *Husband* and the Church his *Spouse*, which two Metaphors signifie the same thing, and are both of them names of Power and Authority; as appears from Eph. 5. 23, &c. For *Husbands are said to be the Head of their Wives, as Christ is the Head of the Church, and are commanded to love their Wives, as their own bodies, as Christ loves his Church: so that a Husband, as a Husband represents the Head, and the Wife the Body; and what the meaning of all this is, the Apostle plainly tells us: that Christ is called the Head and Husband, because he hath the Rule and Government of us, and therefore exhorts Wives to be subject to their Husbands, as the Church is subject unto Christ the spiritual Head, v. 24. For because the Head in the natural body hath the command and government of all the members; hence Head is a common name for Princes and Governours, Deutr. 28. 13. The Lord shall make thee the Head and not the Tail, and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath, that is, thou shalt rule and govern; Psalm 18. 3. Thou hast made me the Head of the Heathen, and a people whom I have not known shall serve me. And therefore the Apostles always expound this metaphor of Christs being a Head by Power and Authority, Eph. 1. 20, 21, 22. Hath set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all Principalities and Powers --- and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is his Body. Col. 1. 18. And he is the Head of the Body,*

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dy, the Church, who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things, he might have the prebeminence: ἵνα γένηται ἐν πάντιν αὐτὸς πρῶτευων; that is, that he might not only excel other things, but that he might rule and govern them; for so πρῶτευων signifies him who hath the first place of Authority; because Government is naturally entailed on the greatest excellency and perfection. Thus Christ is the Head of all Principalities and Powers, that is their Lord and Governour. Col. 2. 10. This is the true explication of this relation betwixt Christ and his Church. He is the Head and Husband, because he is invested with Authority to govern; and the Church is his Body and Spouse, because it must be obedient to his Laws, and subject to his Government: as we know it is very familiar to call a society of men, who live under the same Laws and civil Government, a body politic, which signifies their subjection to the same Authority, as a body hath but one Head; and that regard they must have to the preservation of the whole, and their mutual care of each other, as members of the same body.

Now the true reason why this spiritual Kingdom of Christ is described by the Authority of a Shepherd over his Sheep, and of a Head and Husband over his Body and Spouse, is to signify the mildness and gentleness of his Government, and that great and near concern he hath for the welfare of his Church: that he governs his Church with the care and tenderness of a Shepherd: that he defends and ransoms his Church with his own Blood, as a good Shepherd lays down his life in defence

defence of his Sheep. Joh. 10. That he loves his Church with the natural kindness of a *Head* or *Husband*; that his Government is only for the good of his Church; not for his own private advantage; as a kind Husband exerciseth no other authority over his Wife, but what is for *her* good as well as *his own*; or as the *Head* hath no other concern, but that all *his members* be preserved in their natural state and vigour, and perform their proper and natural offices; and therefore we may be secure, that *his yoke is easie and his burden light*; that he will be gentle in his Discipline, and favourable in his censures; especially when we consider how dearly he hath purchast his relation to his Church, *that he gave himself for it, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word*, Ephesians 5. 25, 26. Upon which account *we may well be called the Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones, vers. 30.* the Church being, as it were, taken out of his crucified Body, as the Woman was taken out of the Man; as *Christ is said to have reconciled the Gentiles* (that is, taken them into his Church) *in the body of his flesh throug death*, Col. 1. 21, 22. because the Covenant of Grace, which is the Foundation of the Christian Church, and receives Gentiles as well Jews, was sealed with the Blood of Christ; so that the Church is taken out of the crucified body of Christ, which in the mystical sense answers to the Womans being taken out of the Man, which seems to be the Apostles meaning in that place. For the same reason Christ owns himself our Friend, *Joh. 15. 14. Ye are my friends,*
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if you do whatsoever I command you : which does not signifie such an equality betwixt *Christ* and us, as there is betwixt friends, nor encourage any rudeness and unbecoming familiarity in our addresses to him ; but acquaints us with the nature of his Government, that he will rule his Church with the same care and tenderness, which one friend expresses to another.

So that all this is a description of the state of the Gospel, in which our Lord and Master is our Shepherd, our Head and Husband, our Friend and Saviour who hath redeemed and purchased us with his own Blood, who laid the Foundation of his spiritual Kingdom in the most surprising and astonishing goodness, and exerciseth his authority in all the methods of love and compassion. Upon which account God also hath now laid aside in a great measure that severe name of a *King*, and calls himself our *Father*, to assure us of his fatherly care and government, and to signifie that liberty of sons, which we now enjoy under the Gospel, in opposition to the bondage and servitude of the Law of *Moses*.

But then we must observe farther, that though *Christ* be our Lord and Governour, he doth not govern us immediately by himself, for He is ascended up into Heaven, where he powerfully intercedes for his Church, and by a vigilant Providence superintends all the affairs of it, but hath left the visible and external conduct and government of his Church to *Bishops* and *Pastors*, who preside in his name, and by his authority : in the first Ages of Christianity, *Christ* conferred such extraordinary gifts on men, as qualified them

for so great an Office, *Eph. 4.8, &c.* But though these miraculous gifts ceased, when the Gospel was fully published and sufficiently confirmed, yet the Offices still continue for the Instruction and Government of the Church, though managed in more ordinary and humane ways. Christ now governs his Church by men, who are invested with his Authority: which is a plain demonstration of what I discoursed above, that the Union of particular Christians to Christ, is by their Union with the Christian Church; which consists in their regular subjection to their spiritual Guides and Rulers, and in concord and unity among themselves. For if our Union to Christ consists in our subjection to him as our *Lord and Master*, our *Head and Husband*; and this Authority is not immediately exercised by *Christ himself*, but by the *Bishops and Pastors* of the Church; it necessarily follows, that we cannot be united to Christ, that is, cannot own his Authority and Government, till we unite our selves to the publick Societies of Christians, and submit to the publick Instructions, Authority, and Discipline of the Church, as no man can be said to submit himself to his Prince, who denies subjection to those subordinate Magistrates, who act by his Princes Commission: for the Union of Bodies politick (such as the Christian Church is, consists in Order & Government, when all the Members keep their proper places, and are knit to each other by a faithful discharge of their several offices and trusts; Schismatics are in the Church, just as Rebels are in the Kingdom not as part of it, but as open and profest

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feft enemies : but the Apostle tells us wherein the Unity of the Church confifts in *Eph. 4.16.* *Christ is the Head, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that, which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of it self in love.* That is, the fupreme power is invested in Christ as Head, to whom the Church is obedient and fubject, but to make this Union firm and lafting there muft be a regular fubordination of the feveral Members & a mutual difcharge of all Chriftian offices, which is the moft effectual way to advance their fpiritual growth in all Chriftian Graces, and efppecially to encrease that love and friendship, which is the very life and foul of the Church: This indeed fupposes a *visible Society of Chriftians*, profefling the Faith of Chrift, and living in communion with each other; for if there be no fuch visible fociety (as it may happen in times of perfecution, or fome great degeneracy of the Church) it muft of neceffity alter the cafe: our Union to Chrift then confifts in an acknowledgment of his Authority and Subjection to his Laws, which makes us Members of the *universal Church*, though there be no *particular Church* to communicate with: but when there is a visible Church, we are under the neceffary obligations of a *visible Communion*, becaufe herein *our fubjection to the Authority of Chrift*, and confequently *our Union to him*, confifts.

And this by the way gives a plain account of the only caufe that can juftifie our feparation from any fociety of Chriftians: for our Union

with the Christian Church being the Medium of our Union to Christ, while the Church, in which we live, acknowledges the Authority, and submits to the Laws of Christ, we are bound to live in communion with it, because this unites us to Christ. When nothing is made the condition of our communion, which is expressly forbid by the Laws of our supreme Lord, we acknowledge his Authority in our subjection to our spiritual Guides; and we disown his Authority in disowning and affronting theirs; as our Saviour tells his Apostles, *He that beareth you, beareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me*, Luk. 10. 16. But when any Church prevaricates in the Laws of Christ, corrupts his Religion, and undermines the fundamental design of it, which is to make men good and vertuous, when we cannot obey our spiritual Rulers, without disobeying the express Laws of Christ, the reason of our communion with such a Church ceases, because it doth not answer (nay contradicts) the end of Christian Society, which is to *have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*. For in this case we cannot own their Authority, but we must renounce the Authority of our Head and Husband: now as it is in an Army, should any Captain revolt from his Prince, the Souldiers under his command are not bound to turn Rebels, because their Leader is so; or should a whole Troop or Regiment conspire in the Treason, no particular Souldier is obliged to continue in the Company, or submit to the Government of Rebels, no more than he is obliged to be a Rebel; so the same

same reason holds good in any particular Church of Christ, we are then deserting their communion the Laws, and submitting to our Lord and Master can justify a separation from Christ, while the spiritual Kingdom are thus revered, and religion advanced, to separate from the Church to Christ consists in purity, and it is plain, that when we reject Authority.

Now this Political Church may be called, and so hypocritical: united to Christ, supports the truth and subjection to our Christianity is broken, and is entailed on part of our inheritance the Laws and Constitution a great Instrument too often seen, that profession only as the Country, to avoid worldly interest; And is filled with Hypocrites who are great strangers

same reason holds good as to Christian Societies; if any particular Church apostatize from the Faith of Christ, we are then under the same necessity of deserting their communion, as we are of obeying the Laws, and submitting to the Authority of our Lord and Master; but nothing less than this can justify a separation; while the Church is subject to Christ, we must be subject to the Church; while the fundamental Laws of his spiritual Kingdom are observed, and his Institutions revered, and the great ends of his Religion advanced, to separate from such a Church is to separate from the Body of Christ; for our Union to Christ consists in a subjection to his Authority, and it is plain, that we disown his Authority, when we reject those, who act by his Authority.

Now this Political Union betwixt Christ and his Church may be either only *external* and *visible*, and so *hypocritical Professors* may be said to be united to Christ; or *true* and *real*, which imports the truth and sincerity of our obedience and subjection to our Lord and Master: For since Christianity is become the Religion of Nations, and is entailed on us by our Ancestors as part of our inheritance; since it is received into the Laws and Constitutions of Kingdoms, and made a great Instrument of civil Government, it is too often seen, that many men undertake this Profession only as the Mode and Fashion of their Countrey, to avoid singularity, and to serve a worldly interest; And thus the Christian Church is filled with *Hypocrites* and *visible Professors*, who are great strangers to the Life and Spirit

of the *holy Jesus*; while some under the name of Christians practise all the villanies of the Heathen World, and live in a publick defiance to the Laws of that Religion, which they pretend to own; others make a fair shew of external conformity to the Laws and constitutions of this spiritual Kingdom, and conceal their impurities under some glorious and pompous form of Religion, and pass for very good Christians, when they are no better than disguised Hypocrites; and this makes it necessary to distinguish between a meer *external* and *real* Union, between those who do no more than make a visible profession of Christianity, and those who are true and sincere Christians.

Earthly Princes can exact only an external conformity to their Laws, because they can take no cognizance of the secret workings of mens minds, and the end of their Government is attained in the preservation of publick peace and order; But the spiritual Kingdom of our Lord is of another nature, which requires not only an external and visible subjection to Christ our Head and Husband, and a visible Union to the Christian Church, but the homage and obedience of the Soul, the government of our thoughts and passions, the renovation of our minds and spirits, *We must be born again of Water and of the Spirit, if we would enter into the Kingdom of God, Joh. 3. 5.* That is, before we can be the Disciples of Christ, the Subjects of his spiritual Kingdom, which is in Scripture called the *Kingdom of God*, and the *Kingdom of Heaven*; we must be born of *Water*, must make a publick profession

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Now as a visible Profession of Christianity is the Foundation of this external political Union betwixt Christ and his Church; so this new Nature is the Foundation of a *real* and *spiritual* Union. And this the Scripture represents to us under several notions. First, by the subjection of our minds and spirits to Christ, as our spiritual King, when we put our Souls as well as Bodies under his Government and conduct: hence Christ is said *to dwell in our hearts by faith*, Eph. 3. 17. that is, to have the sole command and Empire of our Wills and Affections, to govern our hearts, as a man does the house in which he dwells. And thus all those Metaphors, which signifie our subjection to Christ, must be expounded of the subjection of our souls and spirits to Him, as well as of the outward

conformity of our actions; because Christ is a spirituall King, who rules and governs hearts, as earthly Princes govern the bodies of their Subjects: our subjection to him ought to begin in the Soul, in a sincere acknowledgment of his Power and Authority, in a stedfast belief of his Doctrines and Revelations, and in a chearful and willing obedience to his Laws; such a subjection as a Wife ought to yield to her Husband, and Members to their Head, which must be the effect of a free choice, not a feigned or forced compliance.

Secondly, By a participation of the same nature, which is the necessary effect of the subjection of our minds to him: for the Gospel of our Saviour is the truest image of his mind, he transcribed his own Nature into his Laws, and therefore a sincere obedience to his Laws is a conformity to his Nature. Hence is that exhortation, *That the same mind be in us, which was in Christ Jesus*, Phil. 2. 5. and to be his Disciples is *to learn of him who was meek and lowly in mind*, Matth. 11. 29. Hence also our Union to Christ is described by having the Spirit of Christ Rom. 8. 9. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*; that is, unless he have the same temper and disposition of mind which Christ had, which is called *having the Spirit of Christ* by an ordinary figure of the cause for the effect, for all those Vertues and Graces, wherein our conformity to Christ consists, are called the fruits of the Spirit, *the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth*, Eph. 5. 9. and therefore what the

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the Apostle in that place calls *having the Spirit of Christ*, in the next verse he expresses by *if Christ be in you*: i. e. if you be possesst with the same love of Vertue and Goodness, which appeared so eminently in him; which is much to the same sense with that expression, *of Christs being formed in you*, Gal. iv. 19. *My little Children, of whom I travel in birth again, till Christ be formed in you*: that is, till you be thoroughly instructed in the Doctrine and Religion of Christ, and are thereby molded into his Likeness and Image. Hence in 1 Cor. vi. 17. the Apostle tells us, *He that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit*: that is, herein consists our Union to Christ, that we have the same temper of Mind which he had: for there can be no Union betwixt Souls and Spirits without this, that they are acted by the same Principles, and love and chuse the same things: Bodies are united by an external adhesion of Parts, but Souls by an harmony and consent of Wills. This makes two *one Spirit*, when there is a perfect likeness of disposition, when they agree in the same designs as much as if the same Soul animated them both: When we love God and Men, as our Saviour did, when we are meek and humble, and patient and contented, as he was, we are as closely united to him, as if he dwelt in us, and we in him; as if we had but *one Spirit* in us both.

But Thirdly, There is a closer Union still, which results from this, which consists in a mutual and reciprocal love. When we are transformed into the Image of Christ, he loves us, as being like to him, and we love him too, as partaking of

of his Nature. He loves us as the price of his Blood, as his own Workmanship created to good Works, and we love him as our Redeemer and Saviour. Now Love is the great Cement of Union, which unites Interests, and thereby does more firmly unite Hearts: Hence when our Saviour had told his Disciples, *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you,* John xiv. 20. he explains the meaning of it in vers. 21. *He that bath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my self unto him:* That is, God, and Christ, and Christians, are all united by a mutual and reciprocal Love, founded on a likeness of Dispositions and Actions, on obedience to those Laws, which are but a Copy of the *Original Holiness of God*, and of the *Life of Christ*. To the same purpose Christ prays for his Disciples, *John xvii. 21. That they may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* Which refers to their agreement in Doctrine and Love. Thus, according to the Scripturephrase, Love makes us one with God and Christ, and with each other.

Fourthly, This Union is exprest in Scripture by resembling the Christian Church to *Gods Temple*, wherein he dwells, as formerly he did in the Temple at *Jerusalem*: While that typical and ceremonial Worship was in force, God was pleased to dwell in a Temple made with hands, there he placed the Symbols of his Presence, from thence he gave forth his Oracles, there he received their Sacrifices and Oblations, and returned an answer

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ways present, whom he protects and defends by a vigilant and more particular Providence, whom he hath chosen for his peculiar people, to dwell among them.

And as in the Temple God placed the Mercy-Seat and the Cherubims as Emblems of his Majesty and Presence, for which reason he is so often said to *dwell between the Cherubims* : so he hath now bestowed his *holy Spirit* on the Christian Church, which is a surer pledge of his dwelling among them, than those Types and Shadows were, as the Apostle speaks, *Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*, or among you? That is, this is a sufficient evidence, that ye are the *Temple of God*, in that God hath given his Spirit to dwell with you: which primarily refers to those extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, which God in that Age bestowed on the Christian Church: this was the true *Shecinah* or *Divine Glory* resting on them: for which reason he is called the *Spirit of Glory*, 1 Pet. iv. 14. *The Spirit of Glory and of God resteth on you*: that is, that Spirit of God which is the visible manifestation of his glory in the Christian Church, of which that visible glory which sometimes filled the Jewish Tabernacle, was an Emblem. Hence St. Paul tells us, *That the glory of the New Covenant, which is the Ministration of the Spirit*, (which was confirmed by such miraculous and plentiful effusions of the holy Spirit) *did far exceed the glory of the first Covenant, written and engraven in Stones*, though that was so glorious, that the Children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the Face of Moses, because of the
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glory of his countenance, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8. For this was a glorious manifestation of a Divine Presence with the Church, that God did indeed dwell with them, and walk among them : and though these extraordinary gifts are now ceased, yet the virtue and glory of them still remains, they are a lasting demonstration of Gods peculiar presence with his Church in all Ages, as they are of the truth of the Christian Religion : for the Christian Church in all Ages since Christ and his Apostles is but *one*, and therefore still inherits the glory as well as the Religion of former Ages. In allusion to this, the *Christian Church* is called *God's Building*, 1 Cor. iii. 9. and Ephes. ii. 20, 21, 22. *And are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-Stone, in whom all the Building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy Temple in the Lord, in whom ye are also built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit : ἐν πνεύματι*, that is, a *Spiritual Temple*, in opposition to the *material Temple* at *Jerusalem*, which St. Peter calls οἶκος πνευματικῆς, a *spiritual House* or *Temple*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. all which refers to this notion, that the *Christian Church* is *Gods Temple* wherein he dwells.

Now though all this do most properly belong to the *Christian Church*, as a spiritual Society, that they are the Temple of the living God ; yet it is accommodated in Scripture to particular *Christians* : and *Philo* also alludes to it, καὶ γὰρ ἐστὶ τῷ ὄντι βασιλεῖον καὶ οἶκος Θεοῦ σοφῆς διάνοιας, *that the Mind of a wise and good man is in truth and reality the Palace and Temple of God* : every devout Soul

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is Gods Temple wherein he dwells: an enlightened Mind, which is stored with all the Treasures of Divine Wisdom and Knowledge, is his *Debir* or Oracle; a pure Heart is his Altar, and devout Prayers are spiritual Incense and sweet Perfumes: the Body it self is a consecrated place, and is also called the Temple of God, which must therefore be preserved pure and undefiled, 1 Cor. vi. 19. Nay our Bodies are *Sacrifices* too, which we must offer up to God, by devoting them to his service, Rom xii. 1. for the Scripture loves to allude to the *Temple*, and *Altar*, and *Sacrifices* of the Law, which in a moral sense may very well be accommodated to the Christian Worship and Service, as in their Typical signification they prefigured Christ, whole *Body* was the *true Temple* where the *Divine Glory* dwelt, who was both Priest and Sacrifice, and by his Death put an end to that Typical Dispensation; onely we may observe, that when the Scripture mentions Gods or Christs dwelling with particular Christians, it uses a more familiar stile, and seems rather to allude to a *private house*, than to a *publick Temple*: Thus in John xiv. 23. *If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*: And Rev. iii. 20. *Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me*.

This is all I can find in Scripture concerning the Union betwixt Christ and Christians; and that this is the true account of it (besides what hath been already urged) will evidently appear from those Institutions of our Saviour, which are
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the Instruments and Symbols of our Union to him, which we commonly call *Sacraments*, *Baptism* and the *Lords Supper*: which represent and signifie both our external and real Union with him.

First our external Union: Thus Baptism is a publick Profession of the Christian Religion, that we believe the Gospel of Christ, own his Authority, and submit to his Government: We are baptized *in the Name of Christ*, that is, we publicly own him for our Instructor and Governor, to believe whatever he hath taught, and to do whatever he hath commanded. And the Lords Supper is a foederal Rite which answers to the Feasts on Sacrifices under the Law, whereby we renew our Covenant with our Lord, and vow Obedience and Subjection to him: Hence these Institutions were by the Ancients called *Sacraments*, in allusion to that Oath which Souldiers took to be true and faithful to their Prince, when they were lifted into his Army, which was called *Sacramentum Militiae*, or the *Military Oath*; of this nature are Baptism and the Lords Supper, a Vow and Covenant to be subject to Christ, as our Head and Husband, wherein our external and visible Union consists.

Secondly, They signifie also our real Union to Christ, thus Baptism signifies our profession of becoming new men, our profession of conformity to Christ in his Death and Resurrection, *We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*, Rom. vi. 4. that is Baptism,

or

✓ or our immersion under water, according to the ancient Rite of administering it, is a figure of our burial with Christ, and of our conformity to his death, and so signifies our dying to sin, and walking in newness of life: for the death of Christ must be considered, not barely as a natural death, a separation of soul and body, but as a Sacrifice for sin to destroy the power and dominion of it, and so our dying to sin, (that is, ceasing from the practice of it) is the truest conformity to the death of Christ; and we must consider his Resurrection, not only as his returning to life again, but as his living to God, his advancement into his spiritual Kingdom, the design of which is to promote the interest of Religion, and a divine life, and so our walking in newness of life (a vertuous and religious life) is our conformity to his Resurrection, makes us the true Subjects of his spiritual Kingdom; which the Apostle tells us, gives us an abundant assurance of a glorious resurrection, that we shall in a proper sense rise with him; because this new life, wherein our spiritual Conformity to the resurrection of Christ consists, is an immortal principle of life, which can no more die, than Christ can die again, now he is risen from the dead. Thus Baptism is called *putting on Christ*, Gal. iii. 27. *He that is baptized into Christ hath put on Christ*; that is, hath engaged himself to be conformed to his Image and Likeness, to adorn his Mind with all those Vertues and Graces which appeared in our Saviours Life.

Thus the Lords Supper is a spiritual feeding on Christ, *eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood,* which

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which signifies the most intimate Union with him, that *we are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone*, Ephes.v.30. That as we are redeemed by his Death and Sufferings, are the purchase of his Blood, and so as it were taken out of his crucified Body, as the Woman was taken out of the Man; so by this spiritual feeding on Christ we are transformed into the same Nature with him, as much as if we were of his flesh and bones. This is a Sacrament wherein we celebrate the love of our dying Lord, and express our most passionate love and devotion to him; The memory of what he hath done and suffered for us, excites a just hatred of our sins; sincere purposes and Resolutions of a new life, *to live to him who died for us*; a great hope in God, who hath provided such a Sacrifice and Atonement, such a Mediator and Advocate for us; and a steadfast expectation of a future Reward. This is eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of Christ, when these visible figures of his Death and Sufferings affect our Minds with such a strong and passionate sense of his love to us, and excite in us such a firm hope in God, as transforms us into a Divine Nature: and this is our real Union to Christ, as you heard above.

Now I take it for granted, that there can be no better way to understand the nature of our Union to Christ, than to consider the nature of those Sacraments which were designed as the Instruments and Signs of our Union to him; and if we will take that account the Scripture gives of them, all the Union they signify is onely a publick and visible profession of our faith in Christ,

and subjection to him, as our Lord and Saviour, and a sincere conformity of our hearts and lives to the Nature and Life of Christ.

IV. Fourthly, I observe further, That Fellowship and Communion with God, according to the Scripture notion, signifies what we call a Political Union, that is, that to be in Fellowship with God and Christ, signifies to be of that Society, which puts us into a peculiar relation to God; that God is our Father, and we his Children, that Christ is our Head and Husband, our Lord and Master, we his Disciples and Followers, his Spouse and his Body: Thus in 1 John i. 3. *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ:* where I observe, that our fellowship with the Father and Son is first founded on our fellowship with the Christian Church, that is, on our profession of the Faith of Christ, Obedience to his Laws, Subjection to his Government and Discipline, which he now visibly exerciseth by the Bishops and Pastors of the Church; this unites us into one Society and Body Politick: and now by virtue of our fellowship with the Christian Church, we have fellowship with Christ, who is the supreme Head and Governour of his Church, which is a plain argument, that all the Apostle means by fellowship with God and Christ, is such a Political Union as is between a Prince and his Subjects, between Superiours and Inferiours in the same Society. Now (as you heard before) if this Profession be onely external and visible, without the conformity

and Conformity of our hearts to Christ, it gives us no real relation to God, and only appear to be in fellowship with him, when in truth they are not, such as Christ will not receive, the Apostle adds in the next Verse, *and do not the truth say that God is in the light, and we are in the darkness, &c.* That is, we hope that God will bestow the Inheritance of life, but we live in sin; but we have not real Righteousness, we are not true Christians, then we are not his Children, and Christ will not receive us. So that this fellowship is such a state and condition, as is signified by a visible profession of Christianity, and being united to God as his Church, and united to Christ as his Body, which are the same thing, and all that is meant by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

mity of our hearts and lives to the Laws of Christ, it gives us onely an external Fellowship, or relation to God and Christ; that is, such men only appear to be in fellowship with Christ, maintaining a visible fellowship with his Church, when in truth they are perfect Strangers to him, such as Christ will not own for his Disciples, as the Apostle adds in Vers. 6, 7. *If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light as God is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another, &c.* That is, we abuse our selves, if we hope that God will own himself our Father, and bestow the Inheritance of Children on us, while we live in sin; but when we joyn the practice of real Righteousness with the visible Profession of Christianity, then God will own us for his Children, and Christ for the true Members of his Body. So that this fellowship with God and Christ is such a state and condition, as we are put into by a visible profession and sincere practice of Christianity, and that in short is, that we are united to God as his Sons and Children, and are united to Christ as his Disciples, and Members of his Body, which entitles us to the Inheritance of Children, and all the Blessings of the Gospel.

Thus in 1 Cor. i. 9. *God is faithful, by whom ye are called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*: where the fellowship of Christ can signifie no more than the fellowship of the Christian Church, whereof Christ is Lord and Head, and therefore the Apostle immediately adds in the next Verse, *Now I beseech you Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ* (for the Honour and

Reputation of Christ and his Religion) that you all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions nor Schisms among you, but that you be perfectly joyned together in the same Mind and in the same Judgment. Where he argues from the nature of their Faith in Christ, to the Obligations of Peace and Unity, which plainly evinces that this fellowship with Christ is that relation we stand in to him, as Members of the Christian Church, whereof he is Head.

And that this is the true notion of κοινωνία, which we render sometimes by fellowship, sometimes by communion, is as plain as we can wish, in 2 Cor. vi. 14. where the Apostle dissuades them from having any fellowship with Heathen Idolaters, from eating of their Sacrifices, &c. *Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers*, that is, have no society with those men, whose Religion is so contrary to yours, that you will be as uneasie to each other, as two Heifers in the same yoke, which draw different ways: *For what fellowship hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness?* τίς μετοικη, what is there common between them, which they both alike partake of, as a foundation of union and concord? *What communion hath light with darkness?* τίς κοινωνία which signifies the same thing, what is there common to them both? *What concord hath Christ with Belial?* τίς συμφωνία, what consent and harmony of Mind, to unite them into one fellowship? *What part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever?* τίς μερίς, which seems to refer to those portions of Sacrifices which were distributed among them, as a Symbol of their Union to each other, and to the same God.

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How can a Believer and an Idolater have Sacrifice? What agreement with Idols? τίς συνηθύνει them together in the Temple of God? these expressions are the foundation of Fellowship consists in the union of Interests, and the of Nature, and therefore the with God, by our and that God dwells 16, 18.

Now because of the Act which the Scripture calls Fellowship with Christ, hence it is called communion and fellowship, the blessing which we receive by the Blood of Christ is not the Communion why he calls it the following verses: communion and each other, that of Christ, that the same Father, the same Table v And Secondly, signifies our fellowship with Israel after the

How can a Believer and Unbeliever, a Christian and an Idolater have right to a part of the same Sacrifice? *What agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols?* τὸς οὐκ ἔστιν ἁγίος, what is there to unite them together in the same place, to reconcile the Temple of God with the worship of Idols? All these expressions decypher to us the nature and foundation of Fellowship; the nature of it consists in the union of things, which in Rational Beings consists in mutual Relations and common Interests, and the foundation of it is a likeness of Nature, and consent and harmony of Wills; and therefore the Apostle explains our fellowship with God, by our being the Temple of God, and that God dwells in us, and walks in us, vers. 16, 18.

Now because the Lords Supper is the only Act which the Scripture mentions, whereby our fellowship with God and Christ in this World is exprest, hence it is called the κοινωνία, or the communion and fellowship, 1 Cor. x. 16. *The Cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?* And why he calls it the Communion, appears from the following verses: First, because it signifies the communion and fellowship of Christians with each other, that they are all Members of the Body of Christ, that they are all the Children of the same Father, as being entertained by him at the same Table vers. 17.

And Secondly, It is a communion also, as it signifies our fellowship with God: Vers. 18. *Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of*

the Sacrifice, partakers of the Altar? The meaning of which is, that the Sacrifice which was offered upon the Altar, was reckoned as Gods Meat, as the Temple was his House, and therefore those that eat of the Sacrifice, were entertained at Gods Table, which was a signification of their fellowship with him, that he was their God, and they his People. Thus the Lords Supper is a Feast upon a Sacrifice, even that great and stupendious Sacrifice of the Body of Christ, which was offered upon the Cross; and therefore to eat the consecrated Bread, and drink the Wine, which are the figures of his Body and Blood, is to eat of that Sacrifice, that spiritual Food God hath provided for us. Thus God entertains us at his Table, as his own Children, who are of his Household and Family, as the Members of Christ, who have a right to all the blessings of the new Covenant, which was sealed with his Blood. This is the true interpretation of all Feasts upon Sacrifice, (such as the Lords Supper is in an eminent manner) that it is to eat of Gods food, and to be entertained at his Table, which is such an argument of our fellowship with God, as eating and drinking together is among men, always allowing for that infinite distance which is between God and us.

This is the only Act of Religion which in Scripture signifies Communion and Fellowship, because it is the most proper signification of our fellowship with God, and with each other; but Prayer and Meditation, and such-like Acts of Devotion, are no where called Communion with God, though a prevailing custom hath in our days,

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days almost wholly appropriated that name to them; fellowship with God doth not consist in transient Acts but is a state of Life, that relation we stand in to God and Christ, and there is no Act of Religion, which doth properly signify this fellowship with God, but only eating at his Table: for you will not say, that a poor man enjoys communion and fellowship with his Prince, when he puts up a Petition to him to beg his Charity, or praiseth him for his Clemency and Bounty: to pray to God is an Act of Homage, which we owe him, as he is our Maker and Father; it is a duty which results from our relation to, and fellowship with God, but it is not in its own nature an Act of Fellowship and Communion: which expression I purposely avoid not only because it is improper, and hath thrust out the true notion of our fellowship with God, and not only the notion, but the practice of it too (for certainly did men understand what our fellowship with God is, they would not so much neglect the Lords Supper, which is the only Act whereby our Communion is exprest) but also because men have abused it to great irreverence and familiarity with God in their Addresses to him, while they fancy that they are now acting the part of Gods Fellows, and therefore may talk to him with such freedom as they use in common Conversation.

I have discoursed these things at large, because they are too commonly mistaken: our Union to Christ hath been represented as a Riddle and Mystery which no body can understand, the perfect knowledge of which must be reserved for the

next World, or the coming of *Elias*; and the mistakes about it have had a bad influence upon all Religion, not only to confound the notions, but to debauch the practice of it. The sum of what I have already said is this; That those phrases and metaphors which represent our Union to Christ, signifie our visible Society with the Christian Church, and our sincere practice of the Christian Religion: when we joyn in communion with the Church of Christ, and live in a regular Subjection to our spiritual Governours, and a mutual discharge of all Christian Offices, when we profess to believe the Gospel, and to obey the Laws of our common Saviour, then we are visibly united to Christ, as Subjects to their Prince, and Members to their Head; and vwhen this profession is sincere and hearty, when we really are what we pretend to be, then our Union to Christ is real and spiritual too. A visible and real Union to Christ, differ as a visible Professor and sincere Christian, the one is a Christian only in show, the other is what he pretends to be: and this Union to Christ entitles us to his peculiar Care and Providence, to the influences of his Grace, to the power of his Intercession, transforms us into his Nature and Likeness, and makes us the Temple of God, wherein he delights to dwell. All this may be understood on this side Heaven, and without sending for *Elias* to unriddle it; and this is all the Scripture tells us of our Union to Christ.

S E C T.

Of our Union

I Know not what men love to see like nothing in Religion: God indeed many ceremonies obscure significance away their childish notion of his Divine God hath sent him to make a plain, and of his Will, to approve it self our Affections by ties; and therefore the Christian Religion and unintelligible who despise even and think not Faith, but what son of mankind any instances of may serve instead more easie to be Communion with continued so, had

SECT II.

Of our Union to the Person of Christ.

I Know not whence it comes to pass, that men love to make plain things obscure, and like nothing in Religion but Riddles and Mysteries : God indeed was pleased to institute a great many ceremonies (and many of them of very obscure signification) in the Jewish Worship, to draw their childish minds into a greater veneration of his Divine Majesty. But in these last days God hath sent his own Son into the World to make a plain, and easie, and perfect Revelation of his Will, to publish such a Religion, as may approve it self to our Reason, and captivate our Affections by its natural charms and beauties; and there cannot be a greater injury to the Christian Religion than to render it obscure and unintelligible : and yet too many there are, who despise every thing, which they understand, and think nothing a sufficient tryal of their Faith, but what contradicts the sense and reason of mankind. I might give you too many instances of this, but our present argument may serve instead of many. There is nothing more easie to be understood than our *Union* and *Communion with Christ*, and it had certainly continued so, had not some men undertook to explain

plain it, who have now made it *more than mystical*, that is, an *unintelligible Union*; though indeed that is the least fault, that it cannot be understood; for as they have ordered the matter, it is made to serve a great many evil purposes, and to overthrow the main designs of Christianity. And to make this appear, I shall as briefly and plainly, as the matter will bear, represent to you those other opinions concerning our Union to Christ, which are now in great vogue in the World, and do very unjustly challenge to themselves the name of *Gospel-Mysteries*.

As 1. when we inquire what this Union betwixt Christ and Believers is, they answer in general, *that it is a mystical Union through the Spirit and Faith*. This *Mystical* is a hard word, and therefore to explain it, they tell us, *that this mystical Union is an Union of Persons, where yet Persons and Natures are distinct*. As there is an Union of three Persons in one Nature in the Trinity, and of two Natures in one Person in Christ, which is the *Hypostatical Union*, so the *mystical Union* is an Union of Persons, where both Persons and Natures are distinct: and it is an Union of Persons, but no personal Union. The Person of Christ is united to the person of the Believer, and the person of the Believer is united to the Person of Christ (as it must needs be where the Person of Christ is united to the person of the Believer) which Union is made by Faith, which receives the Person of Christ, and therefore must unite to the Person of Christ (I doubt that consequence is not good, for men are not united to every thing they receive

Dr. Ja-
comb on
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pag. 42.

Pag. 45.

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as it is in the *Marriage-Union*, which joins person
to person. This is not very clear yet, and there-
fore as a fuller explication of it, the same Au-
thor describes it thus, *This mystical Union is* Pag. 48.
that Supernatural, spiritual, intinuous Oneness
and Conjunction, which is betwixt the Person of
Christ and the person of Believers, through the
bonds of the Spirit and Faith, upon which there
follows mutual and reciprocal Communion with each
other. This Oneness and Conjunction are hard
words still, and therefore to explain them, you
must observe, that Christ and Saints are united,
how? why in respect of that Oneness and Conjun-
ction that is between them. This now is as plain
as one could wish, they are one by their Oneness.
Union is Union, and Christ is Christ, and Be-
lievers are Believers, and Oneness is Oneness,
and thus Christ and Believers are united by their
Oneness.

But what are the bonds of this Union? (though
it had been convenient first to have understood
the Union better) why they are the *Spirit and*
Faith, the Spirit unites Christ to us, and Faith
unites us to Christ: and who can deny this to be
a very mystical Union? But besides this mystical
Union, there is a legal or Law-Union betwixt
Christ and Believers, as he is their surety and a
moral Union, the foundation of which is Love (of Pag. 49.
which more in its proper place) and thus the
Person of Christ and the person of Believers are uni-
ted mystically, legally, morally. The design of
all these distinctions is to prove the Union of
Persons betwixt Christ and Believers, and be-
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cause I find this Author hath bewildred himself, I will endeavour to help him out, for it is a very plain case: if Christ and Believers are united, their Persons must be united too; for the Person of Christ is Christ himself, and the Persons of Believers are the Believers themselves, and I cannot understand how they can be united without their Persons, that is, without themselves: but then they are united by mutual relations, as the Persons of a Prince and his Subjects, of a Husband and his Wife are united, or by mutual affections, or common interest, not by a natural adhesion of Persons; but because I find it doth not satisfy these men, that Christ and Believers are united, unless their Persons be united too; it makes me suspect that there is a greater Mystery in this *Union of Persons*, than every one apprehends; and therefore,

Secondly, Let us inquire, what they mean by the *Person of Christ*, to which Believers must be united. And here they have out-done all the metaphysical subtilties of *Snarez*, and have found out a *Person* for Christ distinct from his *Godhead* and *Manhood*: for there can be no other sense made of what *Dr. Owen* tells us, *That by the Graces of his Person, he doth not mean the glorious Excellencies of his Deity considered in it self, abstracting from the Office, which for us as God and Man he undertook, nor the outward appearance of his humane nature neither, when he conversed here on Earth, nor yet as now exalted in glory; But the Graces of the Person of Christ, as he is vested with the Office of Mediation; His spiritual eminency, comeliness, beauty, as appointed and appointed*

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nointed by the Father unto that great work of bringing home all his Elect into his bosom. Now unless the Person of Christ as Mediator, be distinct from his Person, as God Man, all this is idle talk; for what personal Graces are there in Christ as Mediator, which do not belong to him either as God or Man? there are some things indeed which our Saviour did and suffer'd, which he was not obliged to either as God or Man, but as Mediator, but surely he will not call the peculiar duties and actions of an Office, personal Graces. His personal Graces fitted him for the discharge of his Mediatory Office, but whatever personal Graces are in Christ, belong to his Person still, are seated either in his Divine or Humane Nature, and he hath no personal Graces as Mediator, which he hath not either as God or Man. And the Doctor himself, when he accommodates the Description, the Spouse gives of her Beloved, to Christ, tells us, *That he is white in the glory of his Deity, and ruddy in the preciousnes of his humanity, because white is the complexion of Glory, and ruddy is very applicable to his Humanity, because Man was called Adam from the red Earth whereof he was made;* which are excellent proofs, but however white and ruddy belong to his divine and humane Nature, and that without any regard to his Mediatory Office; for he had been white in the glory of his Deity, and ruddy with the red Earth of his Humanity, whether he had been consider'd as Mediator or not. And in his first digression concerning the Excellency of Christ Jesus, to invite us to communion with him in conjugal relation, he tells us,

ibid. p. 52.

Pag. 64.

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that Christ is exceeding excellent and desirable in his Deity, and the Glory thereof, He is desirable and worthy our acceptation, as consider'd in his Humanity, in his freedom from sin, and fulness of Grace, &c. Now though this look very like a contradiction to what he said before, that by the *Graces of his Person*, he meant neither the *Excellencies of his divine nor humane Nature*, yet he hath a salvo, which will deliver him both from contradiction and from sense; that he doth not consider these *Excellencies of his Deity or Humanity*, as abstracted from his *Office of Mediator*: though he might if he pleased, for he considers those *Excellencies* which are not peculiar to the *Office of Mediation*, but which would have belong'd to him, as God and Man, whether he had been Mediator or not: but what becomes of his distinction of the *Graces of Christ's Person as Mediator*, from the *Graces of his Person as God and Man*: when there are no *personal Graces* in Christ, but what belong to his *Deity or Humanity*: and then you can find no other person to be the subject of these *personal Excellencies*, unless his *Office of Mediation* must go for a distinct Person, which is a new kind of heresie. But whatever becomes of the sense of the distinction, there is a very deep fetch in it, the observing of which will discover the whole Mystery of the *Person of Christ*, and our *Union to him*: for these men consider, that Christ saves us, at he is our *Mediator*, and not meerly consider'd as God or Man, and they imagine, that we receive Grace and Salvation from Christ's Person, just as we do water out of a conduit, or a gift and largess from

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from a Prince; that it flows to us from our Union to his *Person*; And therefore they dress up the *Person of the Mediator* with all those personal Graces and Excellencies, which may make him a fit Saviour, that those, who are thus united to his *Person*, (of which more in the next Section) need not fear missing of Salvation: Hence they ransack all the boundless perfections of the Deity, and whatever they can find or fancy, which speaks any comfort to Sinners, this is presently a *personal Grace* of the Mediator: they consider all the glorious effects of his Mediation, and whatever great things are spoken of his Gospel or Religion, or Intercession for us, these serve as *personal Graces* too; that all our hopes may be built, not on the *Gospel Covenant*, but on the *Person of Christ*: so that the dispute now lies between the *Person of Christ* and his *Gospel*; which must be the foundation of our hope, which is the way to life and happiness.

To make this appear; I shall consider that account which Dr. Owen gives us, of the *personal Graces and Excellencies of Christ*, which in general consist in three things. *First his Fitness* Communion with Jesus Christ, pag. 53. *to save from the Grace of Union, and the proper and necessary effects thereof: Secondly, his Fulness* *to save from the Grace of Communion, or the free consequences of the Grace of Union: and Thirdly, his Excellency to endear from his compleat suitability to all the wants of the Souls of men.*

First, That he is fit to be a Saviour from the Grace of Union, and if you would understand what this strange Grace of Union is, it is the uniting the Nature of God and Man in one Person, which

which makes him fit to be a Saviour to the uttermost: He lays his hands upon God by partaking of his Nature. Zachar. 13. 7. and he lays his hands on us by partaking of our Nature; Hebr. 2. 14, 16. and so becomes a days-man or Umpire between both: now though this be a great truth, that the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in Christ did excellently qualifie him for the Office of a Mediator, yet this is the unhappiest man in expressing and proving it, that I have met with: for what an untoward representation is this of Christs Mediation, that he came to make peace by laying his hands on God and Men, as if he came to part a Fray or a Scuffle: and he might as well have named Gen. 1. 1. or Matth. 1. 1. or any other place of Scripture for the proof of it, as those he mentions: but to let that pass, in his chap. 3. he discourses this more at large, and thither I shall follow him. Where he tells us, *how glorious Christ is in his Deity, and how desirable in his Humanity, and what are the glorious effects of the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature.*

As for the first, *how excellent and desirable Christ is in his Deity.* From the Deity of Christ he observes, *the endless, bottomless, boundless grace and compassion that is in him.* It is not the Grace of a Creature, no not of the humane Nature it self, that can serve our turn; if it could be conceived as separate from the Deity, surely so many thirsty guilty Souls, as every day drink deep and large draughts of Grace and Mercy from him, would (if I may so speak) sink him to the very bottom, nay it could afford no supply at all, but only in a
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moral way (and that is a very pitiful way indeed). But when the Conduit of his Humanity is inseparably united to the infinite inexhaustible Fountain of the Deity, who can look into the depths thereof: If now there be Grace enough for sinners in an all-sufficient God, it is in Christ ----- On this ground it is, That if all the World should (if I may so say) set themselves to drink free Grace, and Mercy, and Pardon, drawing Waters continually from the Wells of Salvation; if they should set themselves to draw from one single Promise, an Angel standing by, and crying, Drink, O my Friends, yea drink abundantly, take as much Grace and Pardon as shall be abundantly sufficient for the World of Sin, which is in every one of you, they would not be able to sink the Grace of the Promise (of the Person of Christ you mean) one hairs breadth ---- The Infiniteness of Grace with respect to its Spring or Fountain (the Deity of Christ) will answer all objections ---- What is our finite guilt before it (a World of Sin is something, though it bear no proportion indeed to infinite Grace) shew me the Sinner that can spread his iniquity to the dimensions (if I may so say) (no man ever had more need, nor made better use of so says) of this Grace: here is Mercy enough for the greatest, the eldest, the stubbornest transgressor, &c. enough in all reason this, what a comfort is it to sinners to have such a God for their Saviour, whose Grace is boundless and bottomless, and exceeds the largest dimensions of their sins, though there be a World of Sin in them? But what now if the Divine Nature it self have not such an endless, boundless, bottomless Grace and Compassion, as the Doctor now talks of?

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For at other times, when it serves his turn better, we can hear nothing from him but the *naturalness of Gods vindictive Justice*. Though God be rich in mercy, he never told us yet, that his mercy was so boundless and bottomless: he hath given a great many demonstrations of the severity of his anger against sinners, who could not be much worse than the *greatest, the oldest, and stubbornest transgressors*. But supposing the Divine Nature were such a *bottomless Fountain of Grace*, how comes this to be a *Personal Grace* of the Mediator; For a *Mediator*, as *Mediator*, ought not to be considered as the *Fountain*, but as the *Minister of Grace*: *God the Father* certainly ought to come in for a *share at least* in being the *Fountain of Grace*, though the Dr. is pleased to take no notice of him. But how excellent is the Grace of Christs Person above the Grace of the Gospel? For that is a bounded and limited thing, *it is a strait gate and narrow way that leadeth unto life, there is no such boundless Mercy, as all the Sins in the world cannot equal its dimensions, as will save the greatest, the oldest, and the stubbornest transgressors*.

Thus the Love of Christ is an eternal Love, because his Divine Nature is eternal; and it is an unchangeable Love, because his Divine Nature is unchangeable; and his Love is fruitful, for it being the Love of God, it must be effectual and fruitful in producing all the things which he willeth unto his Beloved: he loves Life, Grace, Holiness into us; he loves us into Covenant, he loves us into Heaven. This is an excellent Love indeed, which doth all for us, and leaves nothing for us to do: we owe this discovery

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covery you see to an *Acquaintance with Christs Person* (or rather with his *Divine Nature*) for the *Gospel* is very silent in this matter. All that the *Gospel* tells us is, that Christ loved sinners so as to die for them, and that he loves good men, who believe and obey his *Gospel*. so as to save them, and that he continues to love them, while they continue to be good; but hates them, when they return to their old vices: and therefore I see, there is great reason for sinners to fetch their comforts; not from the *Gospel*, but from the *Person of Christ*, which (according to that representation which these men make of it) as far excels the *Gospel*, as the *Gospel* excels the *Law*.

But methinks this is a very odd way of arguing from the *Divine Nature*; for if the Love of Christ, as God, be so infinite, eternal, unchangeable, fruitful, I would willingly understand, how sin, and death, and misery came into the World: For if this Love be so eternal and unchangeable, &c. because the *Divine Nature* is so, then it was always so: for God always was what he is, and that which is eternal, could never be other than it is now; and why could not this eternal and unchangeable, and fruitful Love as well preserve us from falling into sin, and misery, and death, as love *Life and Holiness into us*; for it is a little odd, first to love us into sin and death, that then he may love us into *Life and Holiness*; which indeed could not be, if this Love of God were always so unchangeable and fruitful, as this Author persuades us, it is now: for if this Love had always loved *Life and Holiness into us*, I cannot

conceive, how it should happen, that we should sin and die.

Not that I deny, that the Love of God is eternal, unchangeable, fruitful, that is, that God was always good, and always continues good, and manifesteth his Love and Goodness in such ways as are futable to his Nature, which is the fruitfulness of it: but then the unchangeableness of Gods Love doth not consist in being always determined to the same object, but in that he always loves for the same reason, that is, that he always loves true vertue and goodness, where ever he sees it, and never ceases to love any person, till he ceases to be good, and then the immutability of his Love is the reason why he loves no longer; for should he love a wicked man, the reason and nature of his Love would change: And the fruitfulness of Gods Love with respect to the Methods of his Grace and Providence doth not consist in producing what he loves by an omnipotent and irresistible power (for then sin and death could never have entred into the World) but he governs, and doth good to his creatures, in such ways as are most futable to their natures. He governs reasonable creatures by Principles of Reason, as he doth the material World by the necessary Laws of Matter, and brut creatures by the Instincts and Propensities of Nature.

From hence he proceeds to shew, *how desirable Christ is in his Humanity, by reason of his freedom from all sin, both original and actual, and his fulness of Grace; that all Grace was in him for the kinds thereof, and all degrees of Grace for its perfection.*

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fection. This indeed doth represent him as a very excellent Person, a spotless Sacrifice, and a great Example to the World, but these *personal perfections* cannot pass out of his Person to become *ours*.

But then thirdly, you must consider, *That all these Perfections of the Divine and Humane Nature are united in one Person, and this made him fit to suffer, and able to bear whatever was due unto us, which no Creature could do; for if the weight of our sins had been laid upon a meer innocent Creature, how would they have overwhelmed him, and buried him for ever out of the presence of God? No doubt the Sacrifice of Christ, who was God-Man, was of greater value, than the Sacrifice of any meer creature could be, but I know not what this is to his purpose, and do as little admire his Philosophy.*

But his being God and Man, made him an endless, bottomless Fountain of Grace to all that believe: This he was as God, as we were told before, and his Grace was never the more bottomless for becoming Man. The design, you see, of all this is to make the Person of Christ the Fountain of all Grace, from whence we must drink Pardon and Mercy as long as we need any, and such Mercy too, as his Gospel is unacquainted with; he hath a fulness of all Grace in himself, and from thence we must receive the communications of it.

And this brings me to the second sort of the *Personal Graces and Excellencies of Christ, his fulness to save from the Grace of Communion, or the free consequences of the Grace of Union.* As for

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this *Grace of Communion* (as he is pleased to call it, though it sounds a little harsh to be a *Personal Grace*, and yet communicated) *whereby Christ communicates his fulness to Believers*, I shall reserve it for its proper place, and shall at present only consider, what this *personal fulness in Christ* is; which he calls, *all the furniture he received from the Father by the Unction of the Spirit for the work of our Salvation*: and near of kin to this is his third *Personal Grace*, his *Excellency to endear from his compleat suitableness to all the wants of the souls of men*. *There is no man whatever* (this sounds like universal Redemption) *that hath any want in reference to the things of God, but Christ will be unto him, that which he wanteth; is he dead? Christ is life; is he weak? Christ is the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God; hath he the sense of guilt upon him? Christ is compleat Righteousness, the Lord our Righteousness: many poor creatures are sensible of their wants, but know not where their remedy lies. Indeed whether it be life, or light, power, or joy, all is wrapt up in him*. Now it must be acknowledged, that the Scripture doth attribute a *Fulness* to Christ, and he is called *Life and Righteousness, the Power and Wisdom of God*: So that there is no dispute between us, whether Christ have *all fulness in him*, whether he be *our Life and Righteousness, the Wisdom and Power of God*; but the dispute is, in what sense the Scripture attributes all this to Christ. They say, that these are the *Personal Graces* of Christ, as Mediator, which are *inherent in him*; and must be derived from his *Person*; we say, they signify the *Perfection and Excellency of his Religion*, as being the most compleat

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pleat and perfect declaration of the Will of God, and the most powerful Method of the Divine Wisdom for the reforming the World; as it prescribes the only Righteousness, which is acceptable to God, and directs us in the only way to Life and Immortality.

Now to bring this controversie to an issue, there cannot be a more effectual way, than to examine those places of Scripture, which speak of this matter, and to learn their sense of it: for if men be allowed to take Scripture phrases, and put what sense they please on them, we may quickly have as many different Religions, as there are different fancies among men.

To begin then with the *Fulness of Christ*; and the first place, in which we meet with it, is in *Job. 1. 16. And of his Fulness we all received, and Grace for Grace.* Now what is meant by this *Fulness*, we may learn from verse 14. *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of Grace and Truth.* So that this *Fulness*, which was in Christ, is a *fulness of Grace and Truth*; and if we consult ver. 17. we shall find that this *Grace and Truth* is opposed to the *Law of Moses*: *The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.* So that *Grace and Truth* signifie the *Gospel*, which is a *Covenant of Grace*, and is expressly called the *Grace of God*, *Titus 2. 11.* and contains the most clear, and perspicuous revelation of the *Divine Will* in opposition to the *Types and Shadows of the Law*; is *Truth* in opposition to *Types and Figures*: This is the *Fulness* we receive from

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Christ, a perfect revelation of the Divine Will concerning the Salvation of Mankind, which contains so many excellent Promises, that it may well be called *Grace*; and prescribes such a plain and simple Religion, so agreeable to the natural notions of good and evil, that it may well be called *Truth*.

This *Fulness* dwelt only in Christ, and from him alone we receive it; for none of the Prophets who were before him, did so perfectly understand the Will of God, as he did: *No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him* ver. 18. That is, no man ever before had so perfect a knowledg of the Will of God, (which is here called seeing God; because sight gives us the clearest evidence, and the most perfect and particular knowledg) but the Son of God, who perfectly understood all his most secret Counsels, hath perfectly declared the Will of his Father to us. And hence that *Fulness*, which we receive from Christ, is explained by *Grace for Grace*: *And of his Fulness we have received, &c.* viz. *Grace for Grace*: $\chi\alpha\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\iota\ \chi\alpha\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\tau\omicron$, where the repetition of the word $\chi\alpha\lambda\epsilon\upsilon$ with a preposition signifies only that *abundance of Grace*, which is now manifested by the *Gospel of Christ*. There is indeed some difference about the sense of the preposition $\alpha\upsilon\tau\iota$; some of the ancient Fathers expound it by *Vice*, as St. Austin *pro Legis gratiâ, quæ præterit, gratiam Evangelii accepimus permanentem, & pro umbris & imaginibus veteris Instrumenti, gratia & veritas, per Christum facta est*, That instead of the Grace of the Law, which is

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now past, we receive the Grace of the Gospel, which is constant and permanent, and instead of the shadows and figures of the Old Testament, we have Grace and Truth by Jesus Christ; and thus Nonnus in his Paraphrase renders it, ἀντίθετον πρὸς τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, --- though this seems to be a forc'd sense; for the Law is no where called Grace; but Grace is expressly oppos'd to the Law in the next Verse; but however, this you see they agree in, that by the Fulness of Grace and Truth, they understand the Gospel, that perfect Declaration which Christ hath made of God's Will to the World.

Now though every man in his wits must confess that this fulness was first in the Person of Christ (as these men love to speak) before he could communicate it to us; that is, that he first perfectly understood the Will of God himself, before he could declare it to others; yet it is not this Personal fulness we are to attend to, but the fulness and perfection of his Gospel, from whence we must fetch the knowledge of the Divine Will; for whatever fulness be in him, the Revelations of the Gospel onely communicate this fulness to us.

To the same purpose the Apostle discourses in Col. ii. 9, 10. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are compleat (πεπληρωμένοι) filled in him who is the Head of all Principalities and Powers. For the understanding of which we must consider what is meant by that Phrase, That in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead (Θεότης, of the Deity) bodily; which must be acknowledg'd to be an allusive and metaphorical

phorical expression; for God, *who is a Spirit*, cannot in a proper sense dwell *bodily* in any thing. And therefore we must observe, that the design of the Apostle in this Chapter is to perswade the *Colossians* to adhere to the Gospel of Christ; not to be seduced either by Jews or *Gnosticks*, (who talk'd very much in their canting phrase of the *pleromata*) to corrupt the Religion of Christ with Jewish Ceremonies, or Pagan Superstitions, *Vers. 16, 17, 18, 19.* and the principal argument he urges to this purpose, is the perfection of the Gospel-Revelation, *that in Christ* (that is, the Gospel of Christ) *are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, Vers. 3.* ἐν ᾧ ἔστι πάντες θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ τῆς γνώσεως ἀποκρυפוί. That is, not in whom are hid (as our translation renders it, contrary to the sense of the place) but in whom are all the hidden Treasures (θησαυροὶ ἀποκρυφοί) of Wisdom and Knowledge: that is, who hath now revealed to us all those Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, which in former Ages were hidden from the World, upon this he exhorts them to be firm and stedfast in the belief of the Gospel of Christ, and Obedience to it, *Vers. 6, 7.* To beware lest any man spoil them through Philosophy and vain deceit, after the Traditions of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ: That is, lest their Minds be corrupted through Philosophical Speculations, or Traditionary Superstitions, (in worshipping Dæmons and Angels, &c.) which are inconsistent with the Gospel of Christ, and owe their original only to the folly and superstition of Mankind. And then he adds, *For in him* (that is, in Christ) *dwelleth all the ful-*

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fulness of the Godhead bodily: So that this must refer to that compleat and perfect Revelation of the Gospel, which needs not be supplied by the Philosophy or Traditions of men. And to understand the Reason of this Phrase, and the force of the Apostles Argument, we must consider that this is an allusion to *Gods dwelling in the Temple at Jerusalem by Types and Figures*, which were the *Symbols* of his *Presence*: for the Tabernacle or Temple was Gods House wherein he dwelt, and the Mercy-Seat and Cherubims &c. were the Emblems of Gods Presence there, and this Symbolical Presence of God in the Temple, was very agreeable to that Symbolical and Ceremonial Worship, which he then instituted and commanded: He dwelt among them by Types and Figures, and therefore instituted a Typical and Figurative Religion; and this was an imperfect and obscure Declaration of himself to the World: But now God hath sent his Son to Tabernacle among us, *John i. 14. the Deity it self* now dwells in the *Temple of Christs Body*, not by Types and Figures, as formerly he dwelt in the Temple at *Jerusalem*, but by a real and immediate Presence and Union; and therefore those Revelations which are made by Christ, are answerable to the *Inhabitation of the Godhead in him*, contain a true and perfect Declaration of Gods will, in opposition to the imperfect Rudiments and obscure Types and Figures of the Law. So that *σωματικῶς*, or *bodily*, is opposed to *figurative* and *typical*: and this is a plain demonstration of the perfection of the Gospel-Revelation, that the fulness of the Deity dwell *substantially* in Christ, we need not doubt,

doubt, but that so excellent a Prophet as he was, in whom the Deity it self inhabited, hath perfectly revealed Gods will to us. All the figures of the Temple were accomplish'd in *Christ's Person*, he was that in truth and reality, which the Temple was a figure of, *God dwelling among us*, and his Religion answers the greatness of his Person: *The Godhead dwelt in him bodily*, not by types and figures, and his Religion is $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ too, all truth and substance, *The Law was but a shadow of things to come, but the Body is of Christ*, Vers. 17. his Religion is *Body, Truth, and Substance*. So that this place is exactly parallel with *John i. 14. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*, ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, *Tabernacled among us*: herein the figure of the Tabernacle was fulfilled, that *God dwelt in our flesh*: and the Revelations he made of God's will, did agree with the manner of his appearance; were *full of Grace and Truth*, not a typical and figurative, but a plain and perfect Declaration of God's will. And as the Evangelist tells us, *That of his fulness we have all received*; that we are perfectly instructed by him in the will of God, so our Apostle adds here, *And ye are compleat in him*, πεπληρωμένοι, filled in him; you need no other Instructor but Christ, who hath revealed as much of God's will as is necessary for us to know. So that *this fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Christ*, does ultimately resolve it self into the perfection of the Gospel-Revelation; for since the *fulness of the Deity* did inhabit in *Christ's Person*, we need not question but he was able to acquaint us with the whole mind and will of God, and that he would do so. The force of which Reason

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Reason our Saviour himself takes notice of, *John* iii.34,35. *For he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God, that is, declareth his whole will to us, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him.* It is not with him, as it was with meaner Prophets, who had only some particular Revelations of the Divine Will; but *the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily.* The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands.

*They knew
a little: he knew
all.*

Thus the *fulness of Christ*, you see, signifies the Excellency and Perfection of the Gospel; and in other places this fulness signifies the Church of Christ, *Eph.i.22,23.* *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his Body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all:* Where the Church is called the *fulness of Christ*, which makes him (as it were) compleat and perfect; for he cannot be a perfect Head without a Body; hence the Church is called Christ, *1 Cor.xii.12.* *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ: that is, the Christian Church, as it immediately follows; for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and Beza tells us, that this is the Reason of that phrase which so frequently occurs in the New Testament, of being in Christ, that is, being Members of the Christian Church.*

Now the Church is called the *fulness of Christ*, with respect to its extent and universality, that it is not confined to any particular Nation, as the Jewish Church was, but takes in *Jews and Gentiles, bond and free:* for this I take to be the meaning

ing of Col. i. 19. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, which words are commonly expounded to the same sense with Col. ii. 9. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; but if we consult the Context, we shall see reason for a different sense, and Beza observes, that some Expositors by *his fulness* in this place understand the Church: for Vers. 18. the Apostle tells us; that *He is the Head of the Body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the prebeminence: for it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*: where *fulness* must be expounded of the Church, that it pleased God to unite his Church into Christ; for the Apostle assigns this as the reason of Christs being the *Head of the Church*. And if you would know why the Church is called *Fulness*, and *all fulness said to dwell in Christ*: the reason follows in 20, 21. *And having made peace through the blood of his Cross to reconcile all things by him, I say, whether they be things in Earth, or things in Heaven. And you, who were sometime alienated, and Enemies in your Minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled*. This is that *fulness that dwells in Christ*, that he is made the Head of the Universal Church both in Heaven and Earth, that Jews and Gentiles are now united in *one Body*; that whereas in former Ages the Church of God seemed to be confined to the *Jewish Nation*, now it pleased the Father, that Christ should be the *Universal Shepherd and Bishop of Souls*, by him to reconcile all things to himself: and this too is the meaning of that Phrase, *The fulness of him, who filleth all in all*: therefore the Church is called his

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his *Fulness*, because *he filleth all in all* : that is, doth not confine his Care and Providence, and the Influences of his Grace, to *any one Nation or People*, but extends it to the *whole World*.

Thus the *fulness of Christ* signifies in *Eph. iv. 13.* *Till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ* : εἰς μέ-
τερον ἡλικίας καὶ πληρώματος καὶ Χριστοῦ, which is the explication of εἰς ἀνδρα τέλειον, *to a perfect man*. That is, to that perfection of Faith and Knowledge which becomes the *Christian Church*, For ἡλικία signifying the age, and growth, and stature of a man, the fulness of Christ cannot so properly be understood of any thing, as of the *Christian Church*.

This is all that I can find in Scripture concerning the *fulness of Christ*, which either signifies the Perfection of his Gospel, or the Universality of his Church : which is a plain demonstration of those mens Skill in expounding Scripture, who make this Fulness a *Personal Grace* in Christ, and apply it to every thing they can find or fancy in him : *All the furniture that he received from the Father by the Unction of the Spirit, for the Work of our Salvation* : The fulness of his Divine and Humane Nature, the fulness of Love in Christ, the fulness of habitual Grace, fulness of Satisfaction, fulness of Merit, fulness of Power and Vertue, a fulness of Justification, and a fulness of Sanctification : which fulness, I am sure, hath confounded mens notions of Religion, and made them look upon Christ only as a *Fountain*, from whence they must drink Grace, and Mercy, and Pardon, Justification, and eternal Life.

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Let us now consider in what sense Christ is called *our Life*: and he is so called with respect to his Doctrine, his Sacrifice, and that Power he is invested with, to raise us from the dead. He is called *Life* with respect to his *Doctrine*, because he preached the *Word of Life*, and *bath brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel*: hence in *Joh. i. 4.* the Evangelist tells us, *In him was life, and the life was the light of men*: That is, he preached the Word of Life, which enlightened the dark minds of Men: for it is not imaginable how *Life* should be light in any other sense, than as this Word of Life, which Christ preached, enlightened their Minds, and dispelled all the Mists of Error and Ignorance: hence Christ tells his Disciples, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man cometh to the Father but by me*, *John xiv. 6.* that is, I declare the true and only way to Life and Happiness, and no man can thoroughly understand the Will of God, nor consequently be a true Worshipper of him, without learning of me: thus he calls himself the *Bread of Life*, *Joh. vi.* with respect to the Doctrine he preached, *Vers. 33.* and with respect to that Sacrifice he offered for the Life of the World, *Vers. 51.* *I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever; and the Bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the Life of the World.*

Thus Christ is called *our Life*, because he hath power and authority to bestow *immortal Life* upon all his sincere Followers, *John xi. 26, 27.* *I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth*

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liveth and believeth in me, shall never die: That is, he hath power to raise the dead, and will actually raise all those who believe in him, and reward them with Eternal Life. To the same purpose our Saviour speaks, in John v. 25, 26. The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live; for as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself: That is, he first raises those who are dead in sin, to a new spiritual life by the power of his Doctrine, and then hath Authority to raise them to an immortal life. This is the meaning too of that expression in Col. iii. 3, 4. You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God, when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory: That is, you profess your selves to be dead to this World in conformity to the death of Christ; and though that immortal Life which you expect to enjoy with Christ, who is now risen again from the dead, be at present concealed from your view, yet when Christ, who is the Author of eternal life, and hath power to raise us from the dead, shall appear the second time to judge the World, then shall ye appear with him in glory.

So that when Christ is called *our Life*, the meaning is, that he hath published the word of Life to us, which contains the most express Promises of a blessed Immortality, and the most plain and easie Directions how to attain it: and that by his Death he hath expiated our sins, and confirmed all these Promises to us; and being risen from the dead himself, hath now power to

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raise us. We must not dream of fetching Life from the *Person* of Christ, as we draw Water out of a Fountain; but if we would live for ever with Christ, we must stedfastly believe and obey his Gospel, which is a Principle of a Divine Life in us, and then we may joyfully expect, that when our Lord and Saviour comes again to judge the World, he will raise us from the dead, and reward our Faith, and Patience, and Obedience, with *Immortal Life*.

Thus to proceed, *Christ is the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*, which these men call *Personal Graces* too. But I have already shewed you at large, that Christ is the Wisdom of God, with respect to those Revelations he made of God's Will. The Gospel of Christ is the Wisdom and Power of God: 1 Cor. i. 24. *Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*: that is, the Doctrine of a crucified Christ, as will appear from the verses before: *The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.* The Jews were all for Signs and Miracles, the Greeks were for curious Philosophical Speculations, which might gratifie their inquisitive minds, and therefore neither of them could relish that plain simple Doctrine of a crucified Christ: but whatever these men thought of it, the Apostle tells us, that this Doctrine of a crucified Saviour is *the Power of God, and Wisdom of God*: that is, the most powerful Method which was ever used by God for the re-forming

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forming the World, and the contrivance and effect of excellent Wisdom; and thus the Gospel of Christ is called the *Power of God to Salvation to them that believe*: Rom. i. 16. and by this *Foolishness of Preaching*, that is, by preaching this foolish Doctrine (as it was accounted by the Wise-men of the World) of a crucified Christ, *it pleased God to save them that believe*. Christ indeed being now exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on High, may in a proper sense be called the Power of God because all power is given to him both in Heaven and Earth, and he hath the supreme government of all the affairs of this spiritual Kingdom; and this is a *Personal Power* inherent in him, which all good men shall find the blessed effects of: but then the exercise of this Power is confined to the Rules of the Gospel, he hath power to save those who believe and obey him, and he hath power to destroy his enemies, to accomplish all the promises, and to execute all the threatnings of his Gospel: So that this *Personal Power* in Christ can give us no greater encouragement than the Gospel doth; It cannot save any man whom the Gospel condemns, we have no reason to trust to his *Personal Power*, unless we first obey his Gospel: for how omnipotent soever he be, his Gospel is the measure of his Actings, if that condemns us, his omnipotent Power will not save us.

But the chief *Personal Grace*, which these men most vehemently contend for, is still behind, *viz. the Righteousness of Christ*: Now no Christian will deny, that Christ was very righteous, a great Example of universal Holiness and Purity, and it

Communi-
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Pag. 53.

must be confessed, that his Righteousness was not an *imaginary imputed Righteousness*, but *Inherent and Personal*; but what comfort is this to us, that Christ was Righteous, if we continue wilful and incorrigible Sinners? Yes, says the Doctor, *Hast thou the sense of guilt upon thee? Christ is compleat Righteousness, the Lord our Righteousness*: This makes Christ suitable to the wants of a Sinner indeed, that he hath a righteousness for him, which God infinitely prefers before any *home-spun Righteousness of his own*. This is a very comfortable notion for bad men, and such as I would not part with for all the World, did I resolve to live wickedly, and yet intend to get to Heaven: But it is good to be sure in a matter of such importance, and therefore let us consider, in what sense Christ is called *our Righteousness*, and what the Scripture intends by these Phrases of *the Righteousness of God*, or *the Righteousness of Faith*, or *the Righteousness of God by Faith*.

To begin then with that famous place in the Old Testament, *Jerem. xxiii. 6.* where Christ is expressly called the *Lord our Righteousness*: In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called, *The Lord our Righteousness*: a very express place to prove, that *Christ is our Righteousness*: that is, as these men expound it, *that the only righteousness, wherewith we must appear before God, is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us*: but is there no other possible sense to be made of this Phrase? *Righteousness* in Scripture is a word of a very large use, and sometimes signifies no more, than *Mercy, kindness, and beneficence*, and so the

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Lord our Righteousness is the Lord who does good to us, who is our Saviour and Deliverer : which is very agreeable to the Reason of this name, *that in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely*: And Righteousness signifies that part of Justice which consists in relieving the injured and oppressed: thus David speaks in *Psal. iv. 1. Hear me, when I call, O God of my Righteousness, i.e. Thou O God, who maintainest my right and my cause, Psal. ix. 4.* Thus in *Isa. liv. 17. No Weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise up against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn; this is the heritage of the Servants of the Lord, and their Righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.* Which is a parallel expression to the Lord our Righteousness, and signifies no more than that God will avenge their cause, and deliver them from all their Enemies. The like we have in *Isa. xlv. 24. Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength; even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed; in the Lord shall all the Seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*: that is, the Lord is that just and righteous Judge, who will justify good men, i. e. deliver them from the violence and injuries of their Enemies : He is *their Righteousness and Strength*, their righteous, strong, and powerful Deliverer : which agrees with that Promise in *Vers. 14. In righteousness thou shalt be established, thou shalt be far from oppression, thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee. And to name but one place more: Isa. lxi. 10, 11. I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the*

garments of Salvation, he hath covered me with the Robe of Righteousness, as a Bridegroom decketh himself with Ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth herself with Jewels: for as the Earth bringeth forth her bud, as the Garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord will cause Righteousness and Praise to spring forth before all Nations. This sounds very like an Imputed Righteousness: for what can be meant by the Robe of Righteousness, but that pure and spotless Robe of Christ's Righteousness, which covers all our sins and deformities, and makes us appear as beautiful and lovely in the eyes of God, as a Bride does, who adorns her self with Jewels? This is the effect of our espousal with Christ, that we are cover'd and adorn'd with his Righteousness: but if we will attend to the circumstances of the place, and not to the bare sound of words, we need seek no farther for the confutation of this fancy; for the Garment of Salvation, and the Robe of Righteousness, signifie those great deliverances God promised to Israel in the former Verses, which should make them as glorious in the eyes of men, as a splendid Garment would: *that Righteousness and Praise which God would cause to spring forth before all Nations: even as the Earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the Garden causeth those things which are sown in it to spring forth*: That is, that God would work such great deliverances for them by such improbable means, & in such plenty and abundance, as if they sprang out of the Earth, which should make it appear to all Nations, *That they are the seed whom the Lord hath blessed*, vers. 9. And what hath this to do with the Imputation of Christ's Personal Righteousness to us? But

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But it is time now to proceed to the New Testament; for indeed we cannot reasonably expect that so great a *Gospel-Mystery* as this of the *Imputation of Christ's Righteousness* is, should be so clearly discovered in the *Old Testament*, where the *Gospel* was wrapt up in *Types and Figures*. Now it is very observable that in all the Histories of the *Gospel*, which give us an account of our Saviours Sermons and Parables, whereby he instructed the People in all necessary Truths, he makes no mention at all of the *Imputation of his Righteousness* to them, but exacts from them a *Righteousness of their own*, if they would find mercy with God: now it is very strange (if the *Imputation of Christ's Righteousness for our Justification* be the great *Gospel-Mystery*, and the only way to find favour with God) that our Saviour in all his Sermons should not once mention this; that he should not once warn his Hearers, (as the *Gospel-Preachers* of our days do) to beware of trusting to their *own Righteousness*, or of expecting Salvation by their *own Works*; but that instead of this, he should so severely enjoin them the practice of an *Universal Righteousness*, as the only thing that pleases God; and so severely threaten those who continue in any sin, *who break the least of his Commandments*, that they shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but shall be banished from the presence of God into outer darkness. This, I confess, to me (who am apt in the first place to admire our *Saviours Sermons*, who was the first *Author of our Religion*, before the Writings of the Apostles themselves, though inspired men) is a very great prejudice against such notions

as are set up for the *Fundamentals of Christianity*, without the belief of which we cannot be saved, when there is not the least foot-steps of them to be seen in the Gospel of our Saviour: for did not our Saviour instruct his Hearers in all things necessary to Salvation? Or have the Evangelists given us an imperfect account of our Saviours Doctrine, and omitted so essential a part of it as the *Imputation of his Righteousness*? Chuse which side you please, and the consequence is very bad: if the first, then Christ was not faithful in the discharge of his Prophetical Office, did not instruct his Hearers in all things necessary to Salvation; if the latter, you overthrow the *Credit* of the Gospel, and by both destroy the Foundation of our Faith.

There were some things indeed which the *Apostles themselves*, by reason of their Jewish prejudices, could not understand, while Christ was with them; and therefore he reserved the more perfect Revelation of those Truths till the *descent of the Holy Ghost*, as he tells his Disciples in *John xvi. 12, 13*. Such was that Doctrine of the Nature of his *spiritual Kingdom*, which should commence with sufferings and death, whereas they expected a *Temporal Messias*, as the rest of the Jews did; and the receiving the *Gentiles into his Church*, which *St. Peter himself* did not understand, till he was instructed by a Vision, in *Act. x.* which is so frequently in the Epistles called that *Mystery which was hid from Ages*: but now the knowledge of these things was not absolutely necessary to eternal Life, and therefore the perfect revelation of them might be deferr'd till the most convenient season.

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It was necessary indeed, that the Apostles should understand the full extent of their Commission to preach the Gospel to all Nations, Gentiles as well as Jews; but it was not necessary to know this, till they were sent to preach: but we cannot imagine, that our Saviour would neglect to acquaint them with the necessary terms and conditions of Salvation: for *his Sermons* were to be the Rule of *theirs*; and had the Apostles taught any thing as necessary to Salvation, which our Saviour had not taught, especially any thing that did so plainly contradict the Doctrine of our Saviour, as this *imputed Righteousness* doth; it would very much have weakened their credit with me; for this had been to preach another *Gospel* than our Saviour did, and we have St. Paul's command to reject such Preachers, though they were *Apostles or an Angel from Heaven*, Gal. 1. 8, 9. I do not speak this to evacuate the Authority of the Apostles, or of their Writings; for they do not make any thing necessary to Salvation, but what Christ did, nor contradict any thing which Christ hath taught: But to awaken those men who take little notice of the Gospel of our Saviour, while they fetch all their *mysterious Divinity* out of some obscure passages of St. Paul's Epistles; Though St. Peter long since told us, *That there were many things in them hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scripture, to their own destruction*, 2 Pet. 3. 16. and yet if they can meet with any obscure Phrases, which will serve their turn, without considering how their sense agrees with the Gospel

spel of our Saviour, they make it the Foundation of their Faith, and a *standing Rule* to expound the Doctrine of our Saviour, and to measure the *Orthodoxy* of all Opinions: whereas on the contrary, this ought to be sufficient reason to reject such Interpretations, that the Gospel of our Saviour is perfectly silent in a matter pretended to be of such absolute necessity to Salvation.

Having premised this, it is time now to consider those Texts of Scripture, whereon they found this notion of the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*: And it is worth observing, that in all the *New Testament* there is no such expression as the *Righteousness of Christ*, or the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*: we there only find the *Righteousness of God*, and the *Righteousness of Faith*, and the *Righteousness of God, which is by Faith in Jesus Christ*; which is very strange, did the whole Mystery of the Gospel consist in the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*, that neither Christ nor his Apostles should once tell us so in express words. But to consider particular places; I shall begin with that Phrase of the *Righteousness of God*, which sometimes signifies his *Justice, Veracity, or Goodness*, Rom. 3. 5. but most commonly in the *New Testament* it signifies *that Righteousness which God approves and commands, and which he will accept for the Justification of a Sinner*; which is contained in the Terms of the Gospel: Rom. 1. 17. *for therein is the Righteousness of God revealed from Faith to Faith*: Thus it is called the *Righteousness of God*, Matth. 6. 33. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, which is the same with the

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the Righteousness of his Kingdom: now the Kingdom of God signifies the state of the Gospel, and the Righteousness of God, or of his Kingdom, that Righteousness which the Gospel prescribes, which is contained in the Sermons and Parables of Christ, and consists in a sincere and universal obedience to the Commands of God.

That we may the better understand this, we must observe farther, that *this Righteousness of God* (that which he commands and rewards) is the *Righteousness of Faith, or Righteousness by the Faith of Christ*: Now *Faith* and *Faith in Christ* is often used objectively, for the Gospel of Christ, which is the object of our Faith, or contains those matters which are to be believed; and so the *Righteousness of Faith, or by the Faith of Christ, is that Righteousness which the Gospel commands*. Thus in *Acts 24.24. Felix sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the Faith of Christ*: that is, concerning *Righteousness, Temperance, and the Judgment to come: V.25.* which are the principal matters of the Gospel: thus *obedience to the faith* is obedience to the Gospel, *Rom. 1.5*. In this sense *Faith* and *Works* are opposed to each other in St. Pauls Epistles, as hath been abundantly proved by others: the great dispute in the Epistle to the *Romans* is, whether we must be justified by the *Law of Moses*, or by the *Faith of Christ*: that is, whether the observation of all the external Rites and Ceremonies of the Law, and an external conformity of our Actions, to the moral Precepts of it will justify a man before God; or that sincere and universal obedience, which the *Gospel of Christ* requires, which transforms our minds

minds into the likeness of God, and makes us new Creatures: And that this Righteousness of Faith, and this alone, can recommend us to God, the Apostle proves from the example of *Abraham*, in the 4. Chapter; who was accounted Righteous for the sake of his sincere and steadfast belief of Gods Promises: *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for Righteousness*, Ver. 3. and this, while he was *uncircumcised*, which is a convincing argument against the Jews, that *Circumcision*, and the observance of the Law of *Moses* is not necessary to Justification, because *Abraham*, who was the Father of the faithful, and is set forth for the Pattern of our Justification, was justified without it.

But that we may understand, what this Justification by Faith is, and how the Apostle argues from *Abrahams* being justified by Faith to prove, that we must now be justified by the Faith of Christ, it is necessary to enquire, what that Faith was, whereby *Abraham* was justified, and what agreement there is between the *Faith of Abraham*, and *Faith in Christ*.

For *Abrahams* Faith was not a *Faith in Christ*, but *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for Righteousness*: Christ indeed was the material object of *Abrahams* Faith, that is, he believed that promise, which God made of sending Christ into the World, upon which account our Saviour tells the Jews, *your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad: Joh. 8. 5, 6.* But no man could believe in Christ, till he came, that is, could not believe any thing upon his

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There is not a plainer argument, how apt men are to pervert the Scriptures to reconcile them to their own prejudices and preconceived opinions, than to observe what work they make with *Abrahams Faith*, as if that Faith, which was imputed to him for Righteousness, were a *fiducial reliance* and *recumbency* on Christ for Salvation, upon which the Righteousness of Christ apprehended by Faith was imputed to him: for suppose this *Imputation of Christs Righteousness* were revealed in the most plain and express words in the *New Testament*, yet it is hard to conceive, how *Abraham* should learn this great Mystery from that general and obscure Promise, *In thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*, which is all that was ever revealed to *Abraham* concernig Christ: This is such a train of thoughts from *in thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*, to the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*, as Mr. *Hobs* himself could never have hit on: for is there no possible way for God to bless the World, but by the imputation of Christs Righteousness? or is there such a natural and necessary connexion between this blessing and the imputation of Christs righteousness, that we cannot understand the one without the other.

Pray let us consider, how many things *Abraham* must distinctly know (according to these mens own principles) before he could come to the knowledg of the imputation of Christs Righteous-

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Righteousness; and he would be a wonderful man indeed, who could learn all this from that general Promise, without some more particular revelation: As first, he must be well assured, that the *Blessings* here meant are *spiritual Blessings, pardon of sin, and eternal life*, and that Christ should be a *spiritual King and Saviour*, and though this be the least difficulty of all, yet the Promise is not so clear and express in this matter, but that men might mistake it, and so we know, the whole *Jewish Nation* for many ages did, who had more particular promises concerning Christ, than this was and yet expected only a *Temporal Prince*, who should sit on the *Throne of David*, and subdue their Enemies under their feet; and this was the great prejudice, which the *Jews* had against Christ and his Religion, that he so much deceived their expectations by his *mean appearance*.

And secondly, *Abraham* must know too, that Christ was to die for the sins of the World, without which (according to the Doctor) it is impossible God should forgive sin, considering the *naturalness of his vindictive Justice to him*; and this was more than the *Apostles* of Christ themselves understood till after his Resurrection, though Christ had expressly told them of it: And Thirdly, He must understand also the perfect Holiness and Innocency of Christs Life, and that he fulfilled all Righteousness, not for *himself*, but for *us*: Nay Fourthly, He must understand that great Mystery of the *Incarnation of the Son of God*; for without this it is impossible to understand the vertue and efficacy

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Now if you would know, what the *Faith of Abraham*, and of all good men in ancient times was, the Apostle to the *Hebrews* gives us a full account of it, in *Hebr. 11*. That he discourses there of a *justifying Faith*, that is, such a Faith as renders men approved of God, and which he will count for *Righteousness*, appears from the whole tenour of this Chapter. In the 2 Verse he tells us, *That by this the Elders obtained a good report*, i. e. the Fathers of the Old Testament were approved and rewarded by God for the sake of this Faith: as he shews particularly that *Abel* obtained witness, that he was *Righteous*, ver. 4. that

that *Enoch* had the testimony, that he pleased God, v. 5 that *Noah* became the Heir of Righteousness which is by Faith, ver. 7, &c. Now this justifying Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen: ὑπόστασις a firm and confident expectation of those things, we hope for, and ἔλεγχος an argument of the being of those things, which we do not see; that is, Faith is such a firm and steadfast perswasion of the truth of those things, which are not evident to sense, as makes us confidently hope for them: The object of Faith must be unseen things, as the Being or Providence of God, or a future state, something past or to come; the Creation of the World, or the final dissolution of it, or the accomplishment of any promises and predictions; the nature of Faith consists in such a firm assent to these unseen things, as produces some answerable effects in our lives; This is the general notion of Faith, by which the Elders obtained a good report, and the different sorts of Faith result from the different objects and motives of it: the Apostle takes notice of two kinds of Faith in this Chapter, and Faith in Christ makes a third, which are all the kinds of Faith, the Scripture is acquainted with.

The first we may call a natural Faith, i. e. a belief of the Principles of natural Religion, which is founded upon natural demonstrations or moral arguments; as that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, which was the Faith of *Abel* and *Enoch*, whereby they pleased God: for there being no mention made of the Faith of *Abel* and *Enoch*, in the Old Testament

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ment, the Apostle proves, that they were true Believers, because they had this Testimony, *that they pleased God*; now it is impossible to be sincerely Religious, or to do any acceptable service to God without the belief of his Being, and Providence, and care of good men: These are the first Principles of all Religion, and God required no more of those good men, who had no other particular Revelations of his Will.

Secondly, There is a Faith in God, or a belief of those particular Revelations which God made to the Fathers of the Old Testament: of this the Apostle gives us many examples in this Chapter: Thus *Noah* believed God, when he forewarned him of the Universal Deluge, and in obedience to him, provided an Ark for the safety of himself, and his Family, and this was imputed to him for Righteousness: *He became the Heir of the Righteousness, which is by Faith*: Thus *Abraham* in obedience to the Divine Revelation left his own Country and Fathers House, and went into a strange Land: thus *Sarah*, by believing the Promise of God *received strength to conceive Seed, and was delivered of a Child, when she was past age; because she judged him faithful who had promised*. Thus *Abraham* in obedience to God offered his Son *Isaac*, which was as Heroical an Act of Faith as was ever done by Man: for besides that great and passionate kindness he had for his *only Son*, which made this a very difficult tryal, this command of offering his Son seem'd to thwart that former promise, *In Isaac shall thy Seed be called*, i.e. that from *Isaac* should proceed that numerous Offspring, which God

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had promised to *Abraham*, which was not very likely, when this very *Isaac* must be offered in Sacrifice, and die without leaving any Child to succeed him; but yet *Abraham* was so well assured both of the faithfulness and power of God, that whatever impossibilities humane reason suggested, he would neither disobey Gods command, nor distrust his promise, *but did believe in hope against hope*: the like examples we have of the Faith of *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and *Joseph*, and *Moses*, &c. who firmly believed all those particular Revelations God made to them, and confidently expected the performance of all his promises: how unlikely soever they appeared to be: This is that Faith whereby *Abraham* and all the good men in those days were justified, *viz. Such a firm belief of the Being and Providence of God, and all those particular Revelations God made to them, as made them careful in all things to please God, and to obey him.*

From hence we learn thirdly, What Faith in *Christ* is, which is now imputed to us for Righteousness, as *Abrahams* Faith was to him; for to make our Faith in *Christ* answer to the Faith of *Abraham*, and all good men in former Ages, (without which the Apostles argument from *Abrahams* being justified by Faith to our Justification by Faith is of no force) our Faith in *Christ* must signifie *such a stedfast belief of all those Revelations, which Christ hath made to the World, as governs our lives and actions*: *Abraham* was justified by believing those Revelations, which God made to him, and we are justified by believing those Revelations which *Christ* hath made of Gods Will

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to us; for if by the *Righteousness of Faith*, you understand the *Righteousness of Christ apprehended by Faith and imputed to us*, you utterly destroy the Apostles argument for our Justification by Faith: for *Abraham* and all the good men of old were not justified by such a Faith as this; they never heard of the *Righteousness of Christ imputed to us*: *Noah was made Heir of Righteousness*, that is was accounted a Righteous Person, because he believed that the *World should be drown'd*, and prepared an Ark at Gods command for himself and his Family: *Abrahams Faith was imputed to him for Righteousness*, because he left his own Country, and followed God into a strange Land, and believed, that God would give him a Son, and make him the Father of many Nations, when he and his Wife were so old, that according to the course of nature, they could not expect any Child: and when *Sarah* by Faith had conceived, and brought forth this *son of the Promise*, he offers this Son at Gods command without distrusting the performance of the Promise: Now what hath all this to do with an *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*? how does it follow, that because *Abraham* was justified by such noble and generous Acts of Faith, therefore we shall be justified by the imputation of Christs Righteousness, by *rolling our Souls on Christ for Salvation*: These two Faiths are of as different kinds, as can well be imagined, and therefore we cannot reason from one to the other, and *St. Paul* certainly understood himself better, than to argue at this weak rate.

And therefore to bring this discourse to an head, the difference between the Faith of *Abraham* and the Faith of Christians is this, *that Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for Righteousness, and we believe in Christ, and this is counted unto us for Righteousness; Abraham believed those Revelations of God made to him, either immediately by himself, or by the Ministry of Angels, we believe all those Revelations God hath made to us by his own Son: for God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past to the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son: Hebr. 1. 1.* So that the first notion of Faith in Christ is a firm belief of his Divine Authority, which necessarily draws after it a belief of the whole Doctrine of the Gospel: thus in *John 20. 31. The Christian Faith is described by believing that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God: and 1 John 5. 5. Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God: That is, that he came from God with full power and authority to declare his Will, and confirm and ratifie the new Covenant. So that the difference between the Faith of Abraham and Faith in Christ is, that Abrahams Faith was founded upon the immediate Inspirations of God, or the Revelations of Angels, but a Faith in Christ is founded on the Authority of Christ, which is the first object of the Christian Faith; and the reason and foundation of all other Acts of Faith: Abraham had only some particular Revelations, as the object of his Faith, but now Christ hath made a perfect Revelation of the whole Will of God,*

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God, which is the object of our Faith; and thus the Christian Faith excels all other kinds of Faith, as much as the Revelations of the Gospel excel all other Revelations made to *Abraham* and other good men: but still the end of all Faith is the same to govern our lives, and make us obedient in all things to God, as *Abraham* was, without which no Faith can justify.

And the same difference there is between the Righteousness of Faith in a general notion, as it is applied to *Noah* and *Abraham*, and those worthies of old, and the righteousness of God by the Faith of *Jesus Christ*: Rom. 3. 22. and that righteousness which is through the Faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by Faith, Phil. 3. 9. The first signifies that Righteousness which is owing to an hearty belief of the Being and Providence of God, and those particular Revelations, which they received from God; the latter is the effect of a sincere belief and obedience to the Gospel, which is the most perfect Revelation which God ever made of his Will to mankind. This is so plain & easie an account of the rise and use of these phrases, and of the force of the Apostles reasoning from the Faith of *Abraham* to the Faith of Christ (which is unintelligible in any other way) that could men be reconciled to plain sense, it would need no other confirmation but the natural evidence of naked and simple truth. But not to be wanting to a good cause, let us now examine those Texts of Scripture, which are abused by these men to set up the Personal Righteousness of Christ as the only formal

cause of our *Justification*, as that alone which can make us righteous before God.

I shall begin and end with that famous place, *Phil 3. 8, 9.* (for the explication of this Will give us occasion to consider all the material passages of Scripture, which are applied to this purpose) yea doubtless; and I account all things loss for the excellency of the knowledg of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffer'd the loss of all things, and I do account them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by Faith: by my own righteousness these men understand *inherent righteousness*, whatever good St. Paul had done, either while he was a Jew, or after his Conversion to Christianity: this he rejects, and therefore the *righteousness which is through the faith of Christ* must needs be an *imputed righteousness*, the *personal righteousness of Christ apprehended by Faith, and imputed to us.* This is fairly offer'd, but what proof have they for it? That, I confess, I cannot learn, only it is taken for granted, that *my righteousness* signifies *inherent righteousness*, and the *righteousness of Faith* *imputed righteousness*, and it is a sufficient answer to this, to say, they need not signifie so. My *own righteousness* can signifie no more than that in which he placed his Righteousness, whatever it was; and what necessity is there to understand this of *inherent Holiness*? an *external Righteousness* serves most mens turn very well, and this is the *Righteousness* by which the Pharisees (and amongst the rest Saint Paul, while he was

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was a Pharisee) expected to be justified; for what his Righteousness was he tells us in *Ver. 6, 7. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the Tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the Law a Pharisee*, (who were mighty strict and punctual in observing all external Ceremonies) and he express his zeal for the Law of Moses, by persecuting the Christian Church, and touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, he was blameless: which last phrase, touching the Righteousness of the Law blameless, signifies only an external blamelessness of Conversation, as Mr. Calvin himself acknowledges: for this was the Pharisees notion even of the moral Law, that the obligation of it did reach no farther than the outward man, and Trypho the Jew in *Justin Martyr* quarrels with the Gospel of our Saviour for this very reason, that it requires the government of our thoughts and passions, which, he says, is impossible for a man to do: and thus we must understand this *blamelessness* here, unless we will say, that St. Paul, while he was a Pharisee, did perfectly observe the moral Law, was blameless before God as well as before men, which I suppose those who talk so much of the impossibility of keeping Gods Laws will be loath to own. So that my own righteousness, which is of the Law, is so far from signifying an inherent righteousness, an inward and vital principle of Holiness, that it signifies only an external righteousness, which consisted in some external rites, as Circumcision and Sacrifices, &c. or external privileges, as being of the Seed of Abraham, and stock of Israel, or an external civility and blame-

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lessness of Conversation, and this Righteousness he had reason to reject, because God will reject it.

This was all the Righteousness he had, while he was a Pharisee, and *this he accounts dung and loss for the excellency of the knowledg of Jesus Christ our Lord; i. e.* for the sake of the Gospel (which is the knowledg of Christ, as you heard above) which contains a more excellent and perfect Righteousness, than the Law did: and that *he might win Christ, i. e.* that he might attain to an Evangelical Righteousness, such as Christ was the Preacher, and example of: and *that he might be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the Law:* that at the last day he might appear to be a sound and sincere Christian, whose Righteousness does not consist only in some external observances, or an external Conformity to Gods Law, *but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by Faith: i. e.* that inward and vital principle of Holiness, that new Nature which the Gospel of Christ requires of us, and which this Christian Faith will work in us; which is a Righteousness of Gods own chusing, which he commands, and which he will reward.

To confirm all this we must observe a double *Antithesis* in the words, *the righteousness of the Law* is opposed to the *righteousness which is by the Faith of Christ*, and *my own righteousness* opposed to the *righteousness of God*; now the surest way to understand the meaning of this is to consider, how these phrases are used in Scripture.

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ready heard) is an *external righteousness*, which consists in washings, and Purifications, and Sacrifices, or an external Conformity to the moral Law: the *righteousness which is by the Faith of Christ* is an *internal Righteousness*, which consists in the renovation of our Minds and Spirits, in the government of our thoughts and passions, which is therefore called *being born again*, and becoming *new Creatures*, and *rising again with Christ*, and *putting off the old man*, and being *renewed in the spirit of our minds*, and *putting on the new man*, which after God is created in *righteousness and true holiness*. The meaning of all which phrases is that that Righteousness which God requires of us under the Gospel must be an inward principle of love and obedience, which changes our Natures, and transforms us into the Image of God, as much as if we were born again, and made new Creatures.

Hence St. Paul tells us, that the reason why God sent Christ into the World in our nature, to die as a Sacrifice for our sins, and to confirm and seal the new Covenant with his Blood was, *that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*, Rom. 8. 3, 4. δικαιοσύνη the righteousness of the Law, that is, τὸ τέλος, ὁ σκοπὸς, τὸ κατ' ὅρον, as St. Chrysostom expounds it, that which the Law was designed to work in them, but was found too weak to effect it by reason of the greater power and prevalency of sin, i. e. the inward holiness and purity of mind, which was represented and signified by those external Ceremonies of Circumcision, Washing, Purifications, and

and Sacrifices; this was the design of the Gospel to work in us that internal holiness and purity, which is the perfection and accomplishment of the *Typical and Figurative* Righteousness of the Law.

I know very well, that this place is expounded of the *imputation* of Christs Righteousness, that we fulfil the Righteousness of the Law, not *personally*, but *imputatively*: but what reason can there be assigned for this, besides that they will expound Scripture so, which no man can help: for is there any mention here of the Righteousness of Christ? that he fulfilled all Righteousness for us, and that his Righteousness is imputed to us, and so we fulfil the Righteousness of the Law in him? And we ought to consider, how consistent such an interpretation is with the Apostles design, which is to shew the great vertue and efficacy of the Gospel in delivering us from the power of sin, which the Law could not effect: *The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus* (that divine and spiritual Law which Christ hath given us, which governs our minds and spirits, and is the principal of a new spiritual life) *makes us free from the Law of sin and death* (from the power and dominion of sin, which is called a Law, and the Law in our members warring against the Law of our minds, Rom. 7. 21, 23.) *for what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, (what the Law could not do, i. e. govern our minds and passions, deliver us from the Law of sin and death, from the power and dominion of our lusts) this God effected by sending Christ into the World to publish the Gospel to*
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us, and to confirm all those great promises and threatnings contained in it with his own blood, *That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*: how can *imputation* come in here? What pretty sense would this make of the Apostles Argument? The Law was too weak to make men thoroughly good, to conquer their Love to sin, and to reform their hearts and lives; and therefore God sent his Son into the World; What for? To give them better Laws, and more excellent Promises, and more powerful Assistances to do good? No, by no means, but to fulfil all Righteousness for them, that they may fulfil the Righteousness of the Law, not by doing any thing themselves, but by having all done for them, by having this perfect Righteousness of Christ imputed to them: there was no reason surely to abrogate the *Law of Moses* for this end; it might have continued in full force still, and have been as available to Salvation as the Gospel is, *with the supplemental righteousness of Christ*: but the weakness of the Law, which the Apostle complains of, was, not the want of an *imputed righteousness*; which might have been had as well under the Law, as under the Gospel, if God had pleased; but a want of strength and power to subdue the sinful appetites of men, *it was weak through the flesh*; by reason of the greater prevalency of sensual lusts, which the Law could not conquer; and therefore the Gospel of our Saviour must supply this defect, not by an *imputed righteousness*, but by an addition of greater power to enable men to do that which is good, to fulfil the external righteousness

Of the Person and Personal

ousness of the Law by a sincere and spiritual obedience.

Much to the same purpose the Apostle discourses in *Rom. 7. Ver. 4, 5, 6.* *Wherefore my Brethren, you also are become dead to the Law by the Body of Christ (who put an end to that imperfect dispensation by his death) that you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God: for when we were in the flesh (under that carnal and fleshly dispensation of the Law of Moses) the motions of sin, which were by the Law (which grew more boisterous and unruly by the prohibitions of the Law, v. 8.) did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death, i. e. did betray us to those wicked actions, which end in death; but now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead in which we were held, that we should serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the Letter.* So that the reason why the Law of Moses was abrogated, was, because it could not make men good; It nursed them up in a ritual and external Religion, taught them to serve God in the Letter, by Circumcision and Sacrifices, or an external conformity to the Letter of the Law: But the Gospel of Christ alone teacheth us to worship God with the Spirit, to offer a reasonable Sacrifice to him, to fulfil the *δικαιοσύνη νόμου*, *all that internal Righteousness, of which those legal Ceremonies were the Signs and Sacraments.*

This is the plain meaning of the Apostle, which can never be reconciled with an *imputed Righteousness*, which would make his argument foolish and absurd: and therefore in other places, he

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tells us, what little reason we have to be so zealous for the Law of Moses, since we have the perfection of it in the Gospel: what need is there of the *Circumcision of the flesh*, which the Law required? when in the Gospel we have that *Circumcision made without hands*, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the Circumcision of Christ; which is the *δικαιομα*, the perfection of that fleshly Circumcision. What need is there of legal washings and purifications? when they are all eminently fulfilled in the washing of Regeneration, in the Gospel Baptism. Thus we are compleat in Christ, who hath perfectly instructed us in the Will of God, and instituted such a Religion as is the perfection of all external Ceremonies; Col. 2. Ver. 10, 11, 12. We must now offer a nobler Sacrifice than the Law of Moses commanded, not the Sacrifices of dead Beasts, but of a living and active Soul, Rom. 12. 1.

Hence Christ is called *τέλος νόμου*, the end of the Law, i. e. the perfection and accomplishment of the Law (as *τέλος* signifies) for righteousness to them that believe; Rom. 10. 4. That is, the Gospel of Christ requires that Righteousness of us, which the Law did only typifie and represent, that holiness and purity of mind which is the perfection of all legal Righteousness: for that Christ should be made the end of the Law for righteousness by the imputation of his Righteousness to us, hath no foundation in the Text. The Apostle explains what he means by this in the following Verses, where he gives us a description of the righteousness of the Law, and the righteousness of Faith: The righteousness of the Law is an external

ternal Conformity to the Letter of the Law, *The man that doth them shall live in them: i. e.* shall enjoy all those temporal blessings of the Land of *Canaan*, which were promised to the observance of the Law: but the Righteousness of Faith is a firm and steadfast belief of the Divine Authority of Christ, *that he is the Lord*; and more particularly a belief of his *Resurrection from the dead*, as the last and great confirmation which God gave to the Divinity of Christs Person and Doctrine: This is that Faith that overcomes the World, and purifies the heart, and transforms us into the likeness of God, which is the perfection of all the ritual Righteousness of the Law.

Upon this account Christ is said to be *made unto us righteousness*, 1 Cor. 1. 20. *But of him are you in Christ; who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption: i. e.* he is the Author of all this to us; He is *our Wisdom*, as he is our great Prophet and Teacher, who instructs us in true Wisdom, *Our Righteousness*, as we are justified by Faith in him, by a sincere belief of his Gospel, which is the only Righteousness acceptable to God; *Our Sanctification*, because the *Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, makes us free from the Law of sin and death*: that divine and spiritual *Law of Faith* conquers the power and dominion of sin, which the *Law of Moses* could not do: and *our Redemption*, as by these means he hath deliver'd us from the bondage and pedagogy of the Jewish Law, from the idolatrous customs of the Heathens, and the tyranny of wicked spirits, and from the wrath of God, which is the just merit and desert of sin.

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Thus you see how the Apostle opposes the *righteousness of the Law* to the *righteousness of Faith*, not as an *inherent* and *personal* to an *imputed* Righteousness, but as an *external* and *ritual* to an *inherent, real* and *substantial* Righteousness, this is the $\omega\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu\ \iota\epsilon\upsilon\delta\omicron\varsigma$, the foundation of all other mistakes in this matter, that by the *righteousness of the Law*, and the *righteousness of Works*, most men understand an internal holiness, the Conformity of our hearts and lives to all moral Precepts and Rules of a good life and then conclude, that if this Righteousness will not please God, nothing but an *imputed Righteousness* can, though I should rather have concluded, that nothing can; but the truth is, the Righteousness of the Law and of Works in the New Testament, signifies only an *external* Righteousness, which cannot please God, and that internal holiness, which they call the *righteousness of the Law*, is that very *righteousness of Faith*, which the Gospel commands, and which God approves and rewards; and this *imputed Righteousness* is no where to be found, that I know of, but in their own fancies.

Let us now consider in what sense the Apostle opposes his own Righteousness to the Righteousness of God: *not having mine own Righteousness, but the Righteousness which is of God by Faith*; and there is no great difficulty in this; for the Apostle himself tells us, that by his *own Righteousness*, he means the *Righteousness of the Law*, and by the *Righteousness of God*, the *Righteousness of Faith*: *And be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through*

through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith : and what that is, you have already heard : thus in Rom. 10. 3. For they being ignorant of Gods righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God : where their own righteousness, which the Jews so obstinately adhered to, was the righteousness of the Law, and the righteousness of God, which they were ignorant of, and would not submit to, was the righteousness of Faith : for this was the great controversie between the Jews and Apostles (which is the subject of this Epistle) whether men were to be justified by the Law of Moses, or by the Gospel of Christ, by a legal or evangelical Righteousness, as appears from Rom. 9. 30. *Israel, which followed after righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness ; wherefore ? because they sought it not by Faith, but as it were by the works of the Law : that is, the Israelites, who pursued so earnestly after Righteousness, are excluded from Righteousness, or forgiveness of sins, and are under a Curse, because they did not look for Righteousness and Justification in the way which God prescribed, which is by Faith in Christ, or by Christianity, but by the observance of the Law of Moses.*

Now the most obvious reason, why this righteousness of the Law is called their own righteousness, and the righteousness of Faith Gods righteousness, is, because this legal righteousness was a way of Justification, not of Gods appointment but their own chusing ; God never designed that any man should be justified to eternal life by observing the Law of Moses, but yet they confidently expected

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expected Justification by that Law, and for that reason rejected the Gospel of Christ: But the *righteousness of Faith* is a righteousness of God's chusing; this he approves and accepts of for the Justification of a Sinner; *by this the Elders obtained a good report, by this Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham* were justified before God: and therefore this may well be called the *righteousness of God*, because this he appointed, and this he will own and reward. Thus, you see, that there is no foundation in Scripture for all this talk of a *Personal righteousness of Christ, inherent in him, and imputed to us*: but the righteousness of which the Scripture speaks, is not the righteousness of Christ's Person, but of his Gospel, that is, that way of Righteousness and Justification, which Christ hath revealed in his Gospel.

I have now considered all the *Personal Graces* of Christ, (as these men call them) and upon inquiry it appears, that what they appropriate to his Person, belongs to his Gospel, and is intended to describe the Perfection and Excellency of his Religion, as being the most perfect Revelation of the Will of God, the most powerful Method of his Wisdom for the reforming the World, the only way to Life and Immortality, and which prescribes the only Righteousness, which is acceptable to God.

There is indeed one metaphorical expression still behind, which exercises mens wits and fancies, *viz. the riches of Christ, Ephes. iii. 8.* Which must needs be a *Personal Grace* too, or *Personal Estate*, or what you will call it: *Unto me, who am the least of all Saints, is this grace given, that I*
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should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ: Where by the unsearchable riches of Christ is meant the Gospel, which St. Paul preached to the Gentiles, as being ordained by Christ to be the Apostle of the Gentiles: and he calls it *unsearchable riches*, because the Grace of the Gospel is not a narrow and stinted thing, is not confined to a particular Nation, as the Law was, but is offered to all Mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles, Bond or Free: the Gospel of Christ contains those glorious discoveries of Gods goodness to all Mankind, as may well be called the riches of his Grace, *Eph. i. 7.* for riches signifie only an abundance.

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And is it not a great violation of the Majesty of Scripture, to sport and toy with words and metaphors, as some men do with this riches of Christs. *That he is rich because he hath a rich Dowry, having all the World given to him as his proper Inheritance; that he keeps open House, and maintains all the Creation at his own charge, and that he hath done this above 6000 years, which would have broke him long since, had he not been very rich; and that he doth not only enrich all the Saints, but all of the Saints; their Understandings with glorious Light, their Consciences with quickness, pureness, &c. and that after all this vast expence he is never the poorer, that he is not a penny the poorer for all that he hath laid out for the relief of those that have their dependance on him; And that Jesus Christ is generally rich, rich in Houses and Lands, (though he had not a place whereon to lay his head) in Gold, in Silver, in Cattel, in all Temporals, as well as Spirituall; and that he hath a great Tribute and*

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Rent due to him, that he is the great Landlord and Owner of all that Angels and Men possess, above and below; These are fine things to perswade young Women to accept of Christ for their Husband, since they can never expect so rich and advantageous a Match any where else: but I have something else to do, than to pursue such follies and extravagancies, as are so palpable, that there is no need to expose them.

SECT III.

Concerning the nature of our Union to Christ, whereby we are intitled to all his Fulness, Righteousness, &c.

HAVING shewed you what kind of *Person* these men make of Christ, how they have fitted him to all the wants and necessities of a Sinner, let us now consider wherein this Union they talk of between the *Person* of Christ, and the *Persons* of Believers does consist.

Now the *Union* betwixt Christ and Christians is represented in Scripture by various Metaphors, which I have already explained at large: but these men instead of explaining these Metaphors, turn all Religion into an Allegory: As for example, Christ is called an *Husband*, and the Church his *Spouse*; and now all the invitations of the Gospel are Christs *wooing* and *making love* to his Spouse, and what other men call *believing the*

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Gospel of Christ, whereby we devote our selves to his Service, these men call that *consent and contract, which makes up the Marriage between Christ and Believers*: Christ takes us for his Spouse, and we take Christ for our Husband, and that with all the Solemnities of Marriage (except the Ring, which is left out as an Antichristian Ceremony) Christ saying thus, *This is that we will consent unto, that I will be for thee, and thou shalt be for me; and not for another. Christ gives himself to the Soul with all his excellencies, righteousness, preciousness, graces and eminencies, to be its Saviour, Head, and Husband, to dwell with it in this holy relation, and the Soul likes Christ for his excellencies, graces, suitableness, far above all other Beloveds whatever, and accepts of Christ by the Will for its Husband, Lord, and Saviour; and thus the Marriage is compleated, and this is the day of Christs Espousals, of the gladness of his heart; and now follow all mutual conjugal Affections, which on Christs part consist in delight, valuation, pity, or compassion, and bounty: on the Saints part in delight, valuation, chastity, duty; which is much like Mr. Hobs his Description of his Artificial Man the Commonwealth: But I have already corrected this fooling with Scripture-Metaphors and Phrases, and my business at present is to consider wherein they place the nature of this Union betwixt Christ and Believers; namely in this, that it is such an Union as makes all Christ ours, and us Christs: when a man is united to Christ, he hath a Propriety and Interest in all his Personal Graces and Eminencies: He is lovely with Christs loveliness, righteous with Christs righteousness; the wisdom, and power, and fulness of*

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of Christ are his ; whatever Christ hath done or suffer'd, is all his, as much as if he had done and suffer'd the same things himself.

Now this *Union of Persons* betwixt Christ and Believers, which gives them such a propriety in all the *Personal Graces* of Christ, is commonly explained by a *Conjugal Relation*, and *Legal Union*, that mutual Relation which is betwixt Husband and Wife, and that Union which is betwixt the Surety and Debtor.

First, They explain this *Union* by a *conjugal Relation*, Christ is a *Spiritual Husband*, and every Believer is his *Spouse* ; now this *Marriage Union* consists in a *mutual resignation*, or *making over their Persons one to another* ; Christ gives himself to the Soul with all his *Excellencies, Righteousness, Graces and Eminencies* to be its Saviour, Head and Husband, for ever to dwell with it in this holy Relation : Now as you know, the Wife by virtue of her *Marriage-Union* is entitled to her *Husband's Estate*, thus are Saints by their *Marriage to Christ* entitled to all his *Personal fulness, beauty, righteousness* : and as a Wife under covert is not liable to an Arrest or Action at Law, but all must fall upon her Husband, so you being married to Christ, this supersedes the process of the Law against you ; if it be not fully satisfied, it must seek its reparation at the hand of your spiritual Husband Christ himself ; as for any condemnatory charge, it cannot fall upon you. This is the sum of all the Reason they alledge to prove that we have a right and title to whatever Christ hath done or suffer'd, by virtue of our marriage to him, because a Wife hath an Interest in her *Husband's Estate*, and is secur'd

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from all Arrests at Law ; and if these be not weighty Reasons, let any man that can give better.

To consider this briefly, they say, *That a Wife hath an Interest in her Husbands Estate, and is secured from all Arrests at Law ; and therefore, Christ being our Husband, all his Personal Excellencies, Righteousness, &c. are ours ; and the Law cannot take hold of us, but our Husband must be responsible for our faults : a very hard Law truly, and I think a Husband is in a very ill case when he has a bad Wife : Now suppose this were the case in some earthly Marriages, it were worth while to consider whether this be essential to Marriage, or whether it depends upon private Contracts, or Publick Laws and Customs, which are arbitrary and mutable ; for if this be not essential to Marriage, how can we be secure that this is the Law of our spiritual Marriage, unless our spiritual Husband had told us so : especially considering, that this spiritual Marriage betwixt Christ and his Church is of a different nature from earthly Marriages ; and if they differ in any thing, we cannot be sure, but that they differ in this, unless we have some better proof of it, than this Analogy and resemblance between earthly and spiritual Marriages ; nay and better proof too, than Dr. Owen gives us of it : Cant. i. 15. Behold thou art fair, my Companion, behold thou art fair ; thou hast Doves Eyes : and Cant. iii. 14. O my Dove, that art in the clefts of the Rocks, and in the secret places of the Stairs, let me hear thy voice, let me see thy countenance ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely ; or Cant. iv. 8. Come with me from Lebanon.*

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And we know, that in marriage, there are private contracts too, and the Wives Interest in her Husbands Estate, may be limited to such conditions as they agree upon: and the truth is, Christ hath not made such an absolute Settle-

The Conjugal Relation

ment of himself upon us, as these men dream he has; for the Gospel contains the Articles of this Marriage (to speak in these mens Dialect) and there we must learn to what purposes, and upon what conditions, Christ gives himself to us, and must challeng no more from Christ, by virtue of our marriage to him, than what the Gospel (the Marriage-Covenant) promises, and we find nothing there of his *Personal Righteousness* to be made ours. As for what they tell us, That a *Woman under covert is not liable to an Arrest or Action at the Law; but all must fall upon her Husband*; it is true as to matter of Debt, but does not extend to Crimes: if a Woman kill her Child, or rob upon the High-way, I doubt her being under covert will not secure her from the Gallows: Was it never known that a Woman was hang'd either with or without her Husband? The Keeper of *Newgate* could have better informed them in this nice point of Divinity: and how secure soever any man may fancy himself of his Marriage to Christ, I would not advise him to venture too much upon it; for if he be guilty of any gross wilful sin, there is some danger that the Law or Gospel may condemn him, unless he timely repent, and reform his Vices.

So that this *conjugal Relation* to Christ does not make him so absolutely ours, as these men pretend, who by their loose Discourses and inconsequent Reasonings, seem neither to understand *Divine* nor *Humane Laws*: When the Scripture calls *Christ* our *Husband*, and the *Church* his *Spouse*, it means no more, but that Christ is our Head and Governour, who rules his Church with

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with as great kindness, tenderness, and compassion as a Husband exerciseth towards his Wife; and that we are to pay the same love, duty, and obedience to Christ, that Wives owe to their Husbands; and here we must have done with the Metaphor, unless we will turn Religion into a Romance.

Secondly, Christ and Believers are *legally* united: now there are two different ways of explaining this, some insist most upon the notion of a *Surety*, others of a *Mediator*, which come much to one, but yet have some peculiar absurdities belonging to each of them: as for the notion of a *Surety*, which is the first way, Dr. *Jacomb* gives us this account of it, That *Christ, as the Saints εἰς ὅ, or Surety, struck hands with God, (as the word imports) put himself into their stead, took their Debt upon himself, and bound himself upon their account to make satisfaction to God: Now in Law the Debtor and the Surety are but one Person, the Law looks upon them as one, and makes no difference between them, and therefore both are equally liable to the Debt, and if the one pay it, it is as much in the eye of the Law, as if the other had paid it: Thus it is with Christ and us, he is our Surety, for he took our Debt upon himself, engaged to pay whatever we owed, for us; upon this, Christ and we are but one Person before God, and accordingly he deals with us; for he makes over our sins to Christ, and also Christ's righteousness and satisfaction to us, he now in a legal notion looking upon both but as one Person.* ibid.

This is the account of Christ's being our *Surety*; now I have two things to say to this: First,

Christ the Saints Surety.

I wonder why this should be called the *Union of Saints to Christ*? Or why Christ should be called *only the Saints Surety*? The Apostle tells us, that he is *ἐγὼ τοῦ διαθήματος*, Heb. vii. 22. *The Surety of a Testament or Covenant*: Now as I take it, there is a vast difference between *Christ's being the Saints Surety*, and the *Surety of the Covenant*, for the *Covenant* respects both *Saints* and *Sinners*, and therefore is antecedent to our *Union to Christ, as Saints*: and to be a *Surety of the Covenant* signifies no more than to confirm and ratify this *Covenant*, and to undertake for the performance of it, that all the *Promises of the Covenant* shall be made good upon such terms and conditions, as are annexed to them; but to be a *Surety for Saints* (as the Doctor explains it) is to *strike hands with God*, (as men do at making a bargain) and to *put himself into their stead, to do and to suffer, what they ought to have done and suffer'd, upon which God makes over our sins to Christ, and Christ's righteousness and satisfaction to us*; Now this notion is so different from the notion of a *Surety of a Covenant*, that methinks it wants some better proof than barely Christs being called a *Surety*, or the *Surety of a Covenant*.

But Secondly, Suppose Christ had been called the *Saints Surety*, I doubt they are as much out in the *Law of Suretyship*, as they were before in the *Laws of Marriage*; though the Dr. tells us, *that this doth so exactly fall in with the common notion and case of Suretyship among men, that he needs not any further insist on the illustration of it*. I confess I am of another mind, and think it wants a great deal more illustration than he hath bestowed

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Secondly, Suppose that *Christ died for us as our Surety*, (though I think, however the Doctor triumphs in this, the *Socinians* have no reason to be afraid of such Adversaries, who have no better way to defend the Satisfaction of Christ than by the notion of Suretiship) yet did *Christ fulfil all righteousness for us as our Surety too*? Doth this also so exactly answer the case of *Suretiship among men*, that there is no need to insist upon the illustration of it? The Doctor indeed was so wise, that he would not assert this in
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the premises, but very craftily thrusts it into the Conclusion, that *therefore God makes over our sins to Christ, and Christ's righteousness and satisfaction to us*: But was there ever such a Suretiship heard of among men, that one man should discharge all the Offices of Piety and Vertue, Justice and Temperance, instead of another? If such a thing had ever been, such a man ought not to have been called a *Surety*, but a *Proxy*; but humane Laws, as many defects as there are in them, never admitted of such Proxies, for these are personal Duties, which no other can perform for us; and you may as well say, that a man may live, and be a man by Proxy, as discharge those Duties which are necessarily entailed on his *Person*, by a *Proxy*: Proxies are allowable only in such cases, where the consideration of the Person that doth it, is not essential to the Action; where the material Inquiry is, whether the thing be done, not who doth it; but where the consideration of the Person that doth it, is essential to the Action, there is no place for a Surety or Proxy (call him what you will) because in this case it doth not satisfy the Law, that the thing is done, unless it be done by such a Person: Thus it is in all the Duties of Piety and Religion, every individual Person is bound to do them; and though there were never so many righteous men in the World, their Righteousness can avail none but themselves; nay the *Righteousness of God*, which is more than the Righteousness of all the men in the World, cannot make an unrighteous man righteous; no *external Relation* can make the Righteousness of another our Righteousness, because

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cause it is a Personal Righteousness that is required of us, and the Righteousness of another can never be our *Personal Righteousness*, unless we become One Person with him: and therefore though the Doctor be so careful to tell us, that *our Union to Christ is an Union of Persons, but no Personal Union, that we are not transformed into the Essence and being of Christ, so as to be Christed with Christ*; yet indeed there is no other way to make the *Personal Righteousness of Christ* our *Personal Righteousness* (which is the Righteousness required of us) but by a *Personal Union* to Christ, by *being Christed with Christ*, as some speak, how *boldly* soever, yet very agreeably to these Principles.

But Thirdly, Let us consider what Truth there is in what he asserts, *That in the Law the Debtor and the Surety are but one Person, the Law looks upon them but as one, and therefore both are equally liable to the Debt, and if the one pay it, it is as much in the Eye of the Law as if the other had paid it*, which he makes the Foundation of the *Imputation of Christ's Righteousness and Satisfaction to us*, because *he being our Surety, we are but one Person with him*; that is, *legally, not personally one Person*, as he warily distinguishes.

Now there needs no great skill in the Law to discover the weakness and Sophistry of this Discourse: for no considering man can think it indifferent who pays the Debt, the Surety or the Debtor, or that they are both equally obliged to it; the Debtor is the immediate Debtor still, and the Surety only is obliged, in case the other refuse, or be unable to pay the Debt, and that is, some

some little difference: but then, though the Creditor be satisfied, whether the Debt be paid by the Debtor or his Surety, and the Law will allow him no farther Action against either of them, yet the Law doth not account it indifferent which of them pay it; for though it permit the payment to be exacted from the Surety, in case the Debtor refuse; yet it will look back again, and allow the Surety an Action against the Debtor, for such a Refusal; which is an Argument that the Law doth not judge them *one Person*, nor think it indifferent which of them pays the Debt.

Thus it is in other Cases, if a man be Surety for the appearance of another, which is called giving Bail, and is sometimes admitted in Criminal Causes; the Law doth not judge them *one Person*; for if the Prisoner escape, the Bail or Surety shall be punish'd according to the nature of the Fact, and yet the Prisoner is not quitted by this means, but liable either to the Arrest of the Surety, or in Criminal Causes to the Sentence of the Law, if ever he be re-taken.

Thus in Sureties for good Behaviour (which sounds as if it were nearest of kin to the imputation of Christ's Righteousness, as our Surety) though the Surety be never so innocent and virtuous a Person himself, this will not serve him for whom he is Surety; but if he prove a Villain, they shall be both punisht: So that humane Laws are strangers to this mystery of imputing the righteousness of a Surety to a bad man. Suretiship doth not so unite their Persons, that whatever one doth is always and to all purposes imputed to the other, and

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and if this will not hold good among men, it is a very sorry foundation for this bargain and exchange betwixt Christ and Believers, *That he should take their sins upon himself, and impute his Righteousness to them.*

Let us now try, whether the notion of a *Mediator* can do any better service than the notion of a *Surety*; which is the *second way* of explaining this *legal Union* betwixt Christ and Believers, which entitles them to all that Christ hath done or suffered: and what this means we may learn from Dr. Owen, who gives us this account of it: *That Christ fulfilled all Righteousness, as he was Mediator, and that whatever he did as Mediator, he did it for them whose Mediator he was, or in whose stead and for whose good he executed the Office of a Mediator before God; and hence it is, that his compleat and perfect Obedience to the Law, is reckoned to us.* This is well said, if it were as well proved, & because this is a matter of great consequence, I shall first examine those reasons the Doctor alledges, to prove, *That Christ fulfilled all Righteousness, as he was Mediator, in their stead whose Mediator he was*: Secondly, to avoid calumnies and objections, I shall shew you briefly *what influence the Righteousness of Christs Life, and the Sacrifice of his death have upon our acceptance with God.*

As for the first, we have some reason to require good proof of this, since the notion of a *Mediator* includes no such thing: A *Mediator* is one who interposes between two differing Parties, to accommodate the difference: but it was never heard of yet, that it was the Office of a *Mediator* to perform the terms and conditions himself.

Communion with the Son, Chap. 6. p. 182,

self. *Moses* was the *Mediator* of the first Covenant, *Gal.iii.9.* and his Office was to receive the Law from God, and to deliver it to the people, and to command them to observe those Rites, and Sacrifices, and Expiations, which God had ordained; but he was not to fulfil the *Righteousness of the Law* for the whole Congregation: thus *Christ* is now the *Mediator of a better Covenant*, and his Office required that he should preach the Gospel, which contains the terms of Peace and Reconciliation between God and men, and since God would not enter into Covenant with sinners without the intervention of a Sacrifice, he dies too, as a *Sacrifice and Propitiation* for the sins of the World, and confirms and seals this New Covenant with his own Blood; and being risen again from the dead, he executes this Office of Mediator with power and glory; that is, he intercedes for us, according to the terms and conditions of this New Covenant, to obtain the pardon of our sins, and the assistance of the Divine Grace to do the will of God; and all those other blessings which are promised: but the Office of Mediator doth not oblige him to fulfil the *Righteousness of the Covenant* for us; this I am sure doth not so exactly fall in with the case and notion of *Mediatorship among men.*

But before we examine their proofs, it is necessary to consider, what it is they would prove, that is, *what that Righteousness is, which, they say, Christ as our Mediator fulfill'd for us* And *D. Owen* is very exact and curious in stating this matter, and distinguishes between the several sorts of Righteousness in Christ, that we may know what belongs to us, and what is peculiar to himself.

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First he tells us of *an habitual Righteousness of Christ as Mediator in his humane Nature, which was the absolute, compleat, exact conformity of the Soul of Christ to the Mind, Will or Law of God, or his perfect, habitual, inherent Righteousness*: now he tells us, that this Righteousness was the necessary effect of the Grace of Union (that is of the Union of the divine and humane Nature in Christ) and that the relation which this Righteousness of Christ hath to the Grace we receive from him, is this; that thereby he was *innoxius*, fit to do all that he had to do for us; for without this he could not have actually fulfilled that Righteousness which was required at his hand, nor have been a compleat and perfect Sacrifice, &c. So that this habitual, inherent Righteousness of Christ is not imputed to us, but was his own proper righteousness.

But secondly, There is the actual obedience of Christ, which was his willing, chearful, obediential performance of every thing, duty, and command, that God by vertue of any Law, whereto we were subject and obnoxious, did require, and moreover to the peculiar Law of the Mediator: Let us then first consider the peculiar Law of the Mediator, which he tells us respected himself meerly (so that we have nothing to do with this neither) and contains all those acts and duties of his, which were not for our imitation, he instances in his obedience which he shewed in dying (though St. John the Divine, (and I think the greater of the two) tells us, that we must imitate him in this also, *must lay down our lives for the Brethren*, as Christ died for us, John 1. 3, 16. and St. Paul tells us, that we must be conformed to the death and resurrection of

The Righteousness of Christ

Christ, Rom. 6. which sounds very like an *imitation*) though in the next page he excepts the Case of *dying*, of his *passive obedience*, and tells us, *that all the rest of his obedience to the Law of mediation is not imputed to us, as though we had done it.* So that by the *Law of Mediation* he understands whatever Christ was bound to do, as our Mediator, whatever was proper to his Mediatory Office, all this (though sometimes, when he better thinks of it, he excepts *dying*) is not imputed to us, as though we had done it: I hope we shall find something at last to be imputed to us, and yet there is nothing left now. But thirdly, That which concerns him in a private capacity, *as a man subject to the Law*, and now *whatever was required of us by virtue of any Law, that he did and fulfilled*; and this is *that actual obedience of Christ, which he performed for us.*

This methinks is very strange, that what he did as Mediator, is not imputed to us, but what he did not as our Mediator, but *as a man subject to the law*, that is imputed to us, and reckoned, as if we had done it, by reason of his being our Mediator: and it is as strange to the full, that Christ should do *whatever was required of us by virtue of any law*, when he was neither Husband nor Wife, nor Father, Merchant or Tradesman, Seaman or Souldier, Captain or Lieutenant, much less a temporal Prince or Monarch; and how he should discharge the duties of these several relations for us, which are required of us by certain Laws, when he never was in any of these relations, and could not possibly be in all, is an argument,

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argument, which may exercise the subtilty of Schoolmen, and to them I leave it.

Having now discovered *what that Righteousness is, which Christ was to fulfil for us, as our Mediator, viz. whatever was required of us by virtue of any law*, whether it concerned us in general as men, or had respect to the various relations, conditions and circumstances of our lives (for each of these have their proper duties belonging to them) setting aside that difficulty of proving that Christ did what he never did, let us consider how the Doctor proves, that what Christ did, he did for us, and in our stead, and here he makes use of a little Reason, and a great deal of Scripture to as little purpose. And to prepare the way for his reasons, I find the Doctor much puzzled (and I do not wonder at it) to prove, that *Christ acted as Mediator in those things which did not concern the law of his Mediation, which he did as a private Common man subject to the law*: for he tells us, that of this expression, *as Mediator*, there is a double sense. It may be taken strictly, as relating solely to the law of the Mediator, and so Christ may be said to do as Mediator, only what he did in obedience to that Law, (that is only what he did as Mediator, which is a pretty observation) but in the sense now insisted on (that is, not strictly as Mediator, but as not Mediator) whatsoever Christ did as a man subject to the Law, he did as a Mediator, because he did it as part of the duty incumbent on him, who undertook so to be: the meaning of which is, that he, who was Mediator, being bound to do such things, though not as Mediator, but as a

man subject to the law, yet he did them as Mediator, because he was a Mediator, who did them: which is just as good an argument, as it would be to prove, that every Embassadour eats, and drinks, and sleeps, as an Embassadour, because though this be no part of his Embassy, yet he is an Embassadour who does it, which is such an exposition of *Quâ*, as the subtillest Schoolman of them all never yet thought of.

Pag. 184.

But there is another objection which troubles the Doctors Head; for since it is the *actual* obedience of Christ, which is imputed to us, he finds it difficult to distinguish the *active* and *passive* obedience of Christ: for every Act almost of Christs obedience from the blood of his Circumcision to the blood of his Cross, was attended with sufferings, so that his whole life in that regard might be called a death: this is a very subtil objection, but observe the answer, that looking upon his willingness and obedience in it, it may be distinguished from his sufferings peculiarly so called, and termed his *active* obedience: this is a strange solution of it, for now it will be as hard to find out what the *passive* obedience of Christ was, for as I remember the Scripture tells us, that he was as willing and chearful in submitting to Death, as in any other Act of obedience, and I am sure our Saviour himself tells us, that he laid down his life, and no man took it from him, which argues some good degree of willingness: what he said in the page before is a much better answer, that doing is one thing, and suffering another, they are in divers predicaments, and cannot be coincident.

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As for this last scruple, the Doctor might very well have spared it, but that a man so well furnished with the knowledg of *Predicaments*, may venture upon any thing; but the former difficulty of *Christs doing those things as Mediator, which did not belong to the Laws of his Mediation*, is a very material one, and requires great skill in Logick to get rid of it; but however it is wisely done to make a show of saying something to that which cannot be answer'd: for he was sensible, that what Christ did *purely as Mediator could not be imputed to us, as though we had done it, though the ἀποτέλεσμα or fruits of it are*, because we were never designed to be *Mediators*, and the *Righteousness of a Mediator* is as improper to be *imputed* to those who are not *Mediators*, as it is to impute the *Righteousness* of a *Prince* to a *Beggar*. The *Righteousness* of every man consists in the discharge of those duties and offices, which belong to his state, condition, and relations of life, not in doing those things which he is not concerned to do; and therefore that the *Righteousness* of Christ might be fit to be imputed to us as our *Righteousness* he was forced to consider him, not as *Mediator*, but as a *private person made subject to the Law, who did whatever was required of us by vertue of any Law*, though this too was impossible, for he could not at the same time act so many different and opposite parts, as there are relations and conditions of men in the World; and yet when he thought on't again, he found, that it was not the *Righteousness* of a *private person*, that would avail us, though it were never so perfect (because we

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The Righteousness of Christ

have no way to come at it, to make it ours) but only the Righteousness of a Mediator, who did whatever he did, for us and in our stead, and so he wheels about again, and tells us, that though what Christ did as a man subject to the Law, did not belong to the Law of his Mediation, yet he did it as Mediator, because he was a Mediator who did it: and thus he is caught in the Net and Labyrinth of his own making, and the more he turns and winds himself, the faster it holds him, *A Mediator, who acts as a Mediator, in a private capacity, as a man subject to the Law.* I shall certainly believe, as they say some Country-people do, that *Logick is Conjuring*, if it can reconcile such palpable contradictions.

It is very *ominous* thus to stumble at the threshold, but though *Mediator* and not a *Mediator* be contradictory terms, which learned men say cannot be reconciled, yet let us forgive him that slip, and see how he proves, that *whatever Christ did is reckoned to us, as done in our stead*; and all the reason I can find in his Discourse may be reduced to three Heads; first, *that Christ was under no obligation to do it himself*; secondly, *that there can be no other reason assigned, why he did it at all, but that he did it for us*, and thirdly, *that this was absolutely necessary it should be so.*

First, *That Christ was under no obligation to obey these Laws himself*, and to make this appear, he discourses particularly both of the *Law of our Creation*, and the *Ceremonial Law given to the Jews.*

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comprehends those eternal Laws, which result from the essential differences of good and evil, which all Mankind are bound to observe by the very frame and constitution of their natures: now he dares not deny, that Christ was bound to obey this Law *for himself*, but then *his obedience* (he says) *was voluntary*; and what of that? for so the obedience of every good man is; for by *voluntary*, he tells us, he doth not mean, that it *was* *meerly arbitrary*, and at *his choice*, *whether he would yield obedience to it*, or not; but on supposition of his undertaking to be a Mediator, it *was* necessary it should be so; but he voluntarily and willingly submitted unto it, and so became really subject to the commands of it, and is it not very plain now, that Christ was not obliged to obey these Laws, because *he willingly submitted to them*? But certainly he means something more by this *voluntary*, than he could tell how to express, and all that I can guess is, that whereas *we* are bound to obey these Laws antecedently to our own choice, it was not so with *him*, for his obligation was only consequential upon his being born, and becoming Man, which was his own choice; and yet even then, as he tells us, *as he was Mediator, God and Man*, he *was not by the Institution of that Law obliged to it*, being as it were exempted, and lifted above that Law by the Hypostatical Union. Now this is very profound reasoning; for the meaning of it is this, that Christ had not been bound to live like a man, unless he had become man, and yet I can grant something more; that it was impossible he should have lived like a man, discharged

ged all the duties of a man without *being man*; but when he chose to be a man, there was no need to chuse any more; for then he was bound by the Laws of his Nature to discharge all the duties of a man for himself: But how could he be *exempted from this Law* (though it be but *as it were*) and raised above it by *being Mediator, God and Man*, when the Doctor himself acknowledges two lines after, that *upon supposition of being Mediator, it was necessary it should be so*, that is, that he should yield obedience to the Law; now *not to be obliged by the Institution of the Law as Mediator*, and that it should be necessary for him to obey the Law as Mediator, are at so great a distance, that it may serve for another tryal of skill to reconcile them.

But Secondly, Though we suppose, that Christ as Man was bound to yield obedience to the Laws of the Creation, yet the Doctor observes, that *this is the only Law he could be liable to, as a Man*: for an innocent man in a Covenant of Works, as he was, needed no other Law, nor did God ever give any other Law to such persons: the Law of Creation is the only Law, that an innocent Creature is liable to, with what Symbols of the Law God is pleased to add: ——— But now Jesus Christ yielded perfect obedience to all those Laws which came upon us by the occasion of sin, as the Ceremonial Law, yea those very Institutions that signified the washing away of sin, and repentance from sin, as the Baptism of John, which he had no need of himself, this therefore must needs be for us. This now looks something like, though I fear, it will prove like all the rest, that

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is, to no purpose : for though the Doctor takes it for granted , yet I would willingly have had some proof of it , that an *innocent man can be bound by no other Law, than the Law of Creation* ; especially since he acknowledges (which is a great favour) that God might add what *Symbols* he pleased to that Law ; (for, I suppose, he remembered the *Tree of Life* , and the *Tree of knowledge of good and evil*) now I know not what these *Symbols* are but *positive Laws*, and such the *Ceremonial Laws* were ; and if God may require the obedience of an *innocent man* , to *one* positive Law , I see no reason, why he may not , if he please , enjoin *twenty such Laws* by the same Authority. But *they are such Laws as came upon us by occasion of sin*, and therefore an *innocent man* cannot be obliged by them : but why not ? Though they were at first commanded upon *occasion of sin*, an *innocent man* may observe them to good and wise purposes , as publick and solemn Acts of Worship, as external and visible expressions of devotion , as a publick profession of Righteousness and a vertuous life , to which purposes among others the Sacrifices and Ceremonies of the Law , and the Baptism of *John* served : And if there were no other reason , this were sufficient , that it becomes an *innocent man* to set an example of reverence to all *Divine Institutions*, that every conceited Religionist, (who may be far enough from being *innocent*) may not presently conceit himself above all *Forms and external Worship*, as the Doctor knows, who are too apt to do .

But

The Righteousness of Christ

But this is not worth contending about ; for the *Righteousness of the Ceremonial Law* could never justify any man , and therefore if Christ had fulfilled this Law for us , it could have availed us nothing. Nor can I understand, why the Doctor should suppose, that Christ fulfilled the Ceremonial Law for all Believers , when the greatest part of them (the Gentiles) were never under the obligation of it.

His second Argument to prove , that what Christ did as Mediator (that is, the actual obedience of his life) he did for us and in our stead, is this, that *there can be no other reason assigned of Christs obedience to the Law of God, but only this, that he did it in our stead.* Now this Argument would be good, were it true, and were there not a great many things done, which we cannot assign the reason of , and yet done for great and weighty reasons ; but it appears from what I have already discoursed, that there was sufficient reason , why Christ should obey the Laws of God, viz. because he was as much bound to it, as any other man is : But to wave this , let us consider how he manages this Argument : he takes it for granted (as he is very apt to do things which he cannot prove) that if Christ were not bound to obey these Laws upon his own account, *it must be either for us, or to fit him for his death and oblation* , but it was not to fit him for his death and oblation , therefore it was for us : for he tells us , *That he answered all Types, and was every way $\iota\alpha\kappa\upsilon\theta$, fit to be made an offering for sin by his Union and habitual Grace ; so that if the obedience Christ performed be*

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not reckoned to us, and done upon our account, there is no just cause to be assigned, why he should live here in the World so long as he did, in perfect obedience to all the Laws of God: had he dyed before, there had been perfect innocence and perfect holiness by his habitual Grace, and infinite virtue and worth from the dignity of his Person, and surely he yielded not that long course of all manner of obedience but for some great and special purposes in reference to our Salvation: yes truly, it was for some great and special purpose in reference to our Salvation, that Christ lived so long in the World, and consequently yielded such a long course of all manner of obedience to God; but must this needs be his actual fulfilling all Righteousness for us? What do you think of his preaching the Gospel throughout all *Judea*, which required, that he should be a man before he did it, and would take up some time in doing it? What do you think of those many Miracles which he wrought for the confirmation of his Doctrine? What do you think of training up his Apostles to succeed him in his Ministry as eye and ear-witnesses of his Miracles and Doctrine? Nay what do you think of the holy example of his life, which was no less necessary than his Laws? These were all great and special purposes in reference to our Salvation, though we should suppose him fit to have been a Sacrifice (as *Herod* designed he should have been) as soon as he was born: though by the way I think he could not have answered the Types and Predictions of him, had he died so soon, notwithstanding his perfect innocence and perfect holiness.

His

The Righteousness of Christ

Commun.
pag. 185.

His third reason to prove that Christ performed all Righteousness for us, is from the *absolute necessity of it*; for *this is the term of the Covenant, do this and live*; life is not to be obtained, unless all be done that the Law requires; that is still true, if thou wilt enter into life keep the Commandments, they must be kept by us, or by our surety: so that we being unable to yield that compleat and perfect obedience, which the Law requires, as the condition of life and happiness, it is necessary that Christ our Mediator and Surety should fulfil the Law for us. Now the best that can be made of this argument is, that it proves it ought to be so, but it does not prove that it is so; just like the Papists alleging the necessity of an infallible Judge to prove that the Pope or Church of Rome is infallible; but such arguments prove nothing but the arrogance & presumption of the disputant, who will undertake to prescribe methods to God, and to prove, that he ought to have done so, when it does not appear that he has done so: the sum of this argument is, that there never was, nor ever can be a *Covenant of Grace*, that God still exacts the rigorous perfection of the Law from us, and that we must not appear before him without a *compleat and perfect righteousness of our own, or of another*: now this is the thing in question, whether we must be made righteous with the perfect Righteousness of Christ imputed to us, or whether God will for the sake of Christ dispense with the rigour of the Law, and accept of a sincere and Evangelical obedience, instead of a perfect and unflinching Righteousness; so that he only confidently affirms what was in dispute, and this goes for an argument. Thus

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Thus you see how weak their reason is, let us now examine their Scripture evidence; and the Doctor makes a great flourish with some Scripture phrases, *that there is almost nothing that Christ hath done, but we are said to do it with him: Commun.* *we are crucified with him, we are dead with him, p. 167. and buried with him, and quickened together with him, &c.* In the actings of Christ, there is by virtue of the compact between him as Mediator, and the Father, such an assured foundation laid of the Communication of the fruit of these actings unto those in whose stead he performed them, that they are said in the participation of these fruits to have done the same things with him: But he is quite out in the reason of these expressions, which is, not that we are accounted to do the same things which Christ did, (for the things here mentioned belong to the peculiar Office of his Mediation, which he told us before were not reckon'd as done by us) but because we do some things like them: our dying to sin is a Conformity to the Death of Christ, and our walking in newness of life is our Conformity to his Resurrection, and the consideration of the Death and Resurrection of Christ is very powerful to engage us to die to sin, and to rise into a new life; and this is the true reason of these phrases, not that Christ did all in our stead, and therefore we are said to do it too, but for a quite different reason because we must do something like it, express the power and image of his Death and Resurrection in our lives.

To this purpose also he cites that Text in *Commun.* *Gal. 4. 4, 5. God sent forth his Son made of a Woman, p. 184.*

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The Righteousness of Christ

*made under the Law,, to redeem them that were under the Law, and here he stops, but I shall take confidence to add, that we might receive the adoption of Sons: now by being made under the Law, he tells us, is meant, being disposed of in such a condition, that he must yield subjection and obedience to the Law, well, suppose this: and this was all to redeem us, and therefore our Redemption is by the obedience of Christ imputed to us: fairly argued; but can his obedience to the Law contribute no otherways to our Redemption, but by being reckon'd as done by us? but the truth is, this *us* is not in the Text, it is not *to redeem us*, but *to redeem them that were under the Law*, that is, *the Jews*, who were in *bondage* under the *Mosaical Law*, from which Christ redeemed them by abrogating that Law, and introducing a better Covenant, *the adoption of Sons*: for in this Epistle, nay in this Chapter the *Law* is called a state of *Servants*, and of an *Heir under Age*, but the Gospel is the *adoption of Sons*, puts us into such a free and manly state, as that of an *Heir at Age*, and therefore is called the *Spirit of Adoption*, Rom. 8. 15. So that the meaning of this Text is this, that God hath now put an end to the dispensation of the Law, which is called *redeeming them that were under the Law*, in a state of servitude and bondage, and hath established a better Covenant in the room of it, which as much excels the Law, as the *adoption of Sons* does the state of *Servants*, and this God brought to pass by sending his Son into the World, made of a Woman, made under the Law: for the understanding of which words we must consider, what influence*

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ence Christs appearing in the World had on the abrogation of the Law, and that was, that he accomplished all the Types and Figures of the Law in his own Person, and when all these Types were fulfilled, they grew out of date: so that his *being made under the Law* most probably signifies, his being made such a Person, as should exactly answer all the Types and Figures of the Law, and so put an end to it, as of no further use: Thus the Temple was Gods House, wherein he dwelt, but now the *Shecinah* or Divine Glory rested on Christ, and the Fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, so that now there was no longer any need of a material Temple, as a pledg of Gods peculiar presence among them; the Priests and Sacrifices of the Law were Types of Christ, and when that great high Priest came and offered that perfect Sacrifice of himself, all legal Priests and Sacrifices were of no use: Thus by his being made under the Law, and accomplishing all the Types and Figures of it, he put an end to all those beggarly Rudiments, and delivered the Jews from the bondage of the Law; for though the Gentiles too are redeemed by Christ, yet they were not redeemed from the Law of *Moses*, under which they never were.

Several other places he alledges to the same purpose, but I have either already considered them, or shall do in what follows; but what I have now discoursed, is enough to satisfy any impartial Inquirer, how vain and precarious this Principle is, which too many make the very Foundation of their Faith, that *Christ as Mediator fulfilled all Righteousness in their stead, whose Mediator he was.* And

And now had I no other design than to expose the mistakes of other men, I should need add no more, till I saw this answered; but I have a greater and better design, *viz.* to explain and confirm the true notions of Religion in opposition to such mistakes, and therefore having shewed you that there is no foundation in Reason or Scripture to fancy such an Union between Christ and Believers (whether we consider it as a *Conjugal Relation*, or *Legal Union*, as he is our Surety or Mediator) as should entitle Believers to the *personal Righteousness* of Christ, lest, any man should suspect, that the design of all this is to *lessen the Grace of God*, or to *disparage the Merits and Righteousness of Christ* (which God forbid any Christian should be guilty of) I shall *secondly* examine what influence the *Sacrifice of Christs death*, and the *Righteousness of his life* have upon our acceptance with God: and all that I can find in Scripture about this, is, that to this we owe the *Covenant of Grace*: that God being well pleased with the *obedience of Christs life*, and the *Sacrifice of his death*, for his sake entred into a *new Covenant* with Mankind, wherein he promises pardon of sin and eternal life to those who believe and obey the Gospel.

This is very plain with reference to the *death of Christ*: hence the *Blood of Christ* is called the *Blood of the Covenant* Heb. 10. 29. and Christ is called the *great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls* through the *blood of the everlasting Covenant*, Hebr. 13. 20. and the *blood of Christ* is called the *blood of Sprinkling*, which speaks better things than the *blood of Abel*, Heb. 12. 24. which is an allusion

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to *Moses* his sprinkling the Blood of the Sacrifice, whereby he confirmed and ratified the Covenant between God and the Children of *Israel*, *Heb. ix. 19, 20, 21.* For when *Moses* had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law, (when he had declared the terms of this Covenant to them) he took the blood of Calves and Goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and byssop, and sprinkled both the Book, and all the people, saying, *This is the blood of the Testament, which God hath ordained to you.* Thus the Blood of Christ is called the Blood of Sprinkling, because by his Blood God did seal and confirm the Covenant of Grace, as the sprinkling the blood of beasts did confirm the Mosaical Covenant. Hence we are said to be justified by the Blood of Christ; *Rom. v. 9.* that is, by the Gospel Covenant, which was confirmed & ratified with his Blood; and Christ is called a Propitiation through faith in his Blood, that is, by a belief of his Gospel, *Rom. 3. 25.* Hence it is also that the Scripture uses these phrases promiscuously, to be justified by faith, and to be justified by the faith of Christ, and to be justified by Christ, and to be justified through faith in his Blood, and to be justified & saved by grace, nay by believing that Christ is the Son of God, *Joh. xx. 31.* and that God raised him from the dead, *Rom. x. 3.* All which signifie the same thing, that we are justified by believing and obeying the Gospel of Christ: for faith, or faith in Christ, signifies such a firm and stedfast belief of the Gospel, as brings forth all the fruits of obedience; and the Grace of God is the Gospel of Christ, expressly so called in *Ti. ii. 11.* as being the effect of the free Grace and Goodness of God to Mankind; and Faith in the Blood of Christ is a belief of the Gospel,

spel, which was confirmed by his death; and believing that *Christ is the Son of God*, that is, that *Messias and Prophet*, whom God sent into the World to reveal his Will to us, includes a general belief of the Gospel which he preached; & *believing that God raised him from the Dead*, doth the same, because his Resurrection from the dead was the last and great confirmation, which God gave to the truth of his Gospel and Religion. And hence it is also, that the Apostles attribute such things to the Blood of Christ, as are the proper, and immediate effects of the *Gospel-Covenant*, because they consider the Blood of Christ as the *Blood of the Covenant*, and therefore all the blessings of the Gospel are owing to the Blood of Christ, because the *Gospel Covenant* it self was procured and confirmed by the Blood of Christ. Thus the *Gentiles who were sometimes afar off*, are said to be made nigh by the Blood of Christ, and the Gentiles and Jews were reconciled unto God in one body by the Cross, *Ephes. ii. 14, 15, 16*. That is, the Gentiles were received into the fellowship of Gods Church, and the Jews and Gentiles united in one Body or Society; now this *Union of Jews and Gentiles* is owing to the Gospel, which takes away all marks of distinction and separation, and gives them both an equal right to the blessings of the new Covenant. The *Mosaical Covenant* did belong only to the Children of *Israel*; but this new Covenant belongs to all Mankind, to Gentiles as well as Jews, there is now no distinction of persons, neither *Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond, nor Free, but Christ is all and in all*: That is, there is no respect of Persons or Nations under the Gospel, no

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man is ever the more or less acceptable to God, because he is a Jew or a Greek, but the onely thing of any value now is Faith in Christ, or a belief of the Gospel, which is indifferently offered to all. Now this is attributed to the *Blood of Christ*, and to his death upon the Cross, because thereby Christ put an end to the *Mosaical Covenant*, and sealed this new Covenant of Grace with Mankind, as the Apostle explains himself in the following Verses, 17, 18, &c. that Christ *having abolished the Law of Commandments by his death, he came and preached peace* (that is, the Gospel of Peace) *to them who were afar off*, (to the Gentile World) *and to them who were nigh*, (to the Jews, who were Gods peculiar people) that is, he abrogated the *Mosaical Law, that Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances*, which was peculiar to the Jews, and separated them from the rest of the World; and he broke down the *middle Wall of Partition*, which kept the *uncircumcised Gentiles, though Profelytes*, at a distance from God, as confining their Worship to the outward Court of the Temple, which the Apostle seems to refer to in that phrase, *them that were afar off*; and now by the Gospel he admits the Gentiles to as near an approach to God as the Jews; as he adds, *For through him we both have an access by one Spirit to the Father*, Verſ. 18.

Thus the Jews are said *to be redeemed from the curse of the Law*, by the accursed Death of Christ upon the Cross, Gal. iii. 13. Because the Death of Christ put an end to that legal Dispensation, and sealed a new and better Covenant. between God and man, and the Gentiles *were redeemed from their*

vain conversation received by tradition from their Fathers; that is, from those idolatrous and impure practices they were guilty of; not with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, and without spot, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Now the Gentiles were delivered from Idolatry by the preaching of the Gospel, which is called their being redeemed by the Blood of Christ, because we owe this unspeakable Blessing to his Death, who having abolished in his flesh (by his Death) the enmity, even the Law of Commandments, &c. came and preached peace to you, which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Now as the Death of Christ upon the Cross, and his Ascension into Heaven, and presenting his Blood to God in that *true holy place*, did answer to the first sprinkling of the Blood under the Law, which confirmed the *Mosaical Covenant*, as the Apostle discourses in *Heb. ix.* So his continual Intercession for us in virtue of his Blood once shed, and once offered to God, answers to those frequent expiations by Sacrifice under the Law, especially to that general Sacrifice on the great day of expiation, when the High Priest entred into the Holy of Holies, with the Blood of Beasts.

The reason why the legal Sacrifices were so often repeated, was, because they were imperfect and typical, *but a shadow of good things to come*, and so could not take away sin; but Christ by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, *Heb. x. 14.* He hath made a perfect expiation for our sins by dying once, and hath sealed the promises

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les of pardon and forgiveness to them who are sanctified, and where remission is, there is no more offering for sin, Verſ. 18. Such a Sacrifice as once for all seals the Covenant of Pardon and Forgiveness, makes all other Offerings and Sacrifices needless; and then the High Priest, who entred into the Holy of Holies with the Blood of the Sacrifice, did not continue there to intercede for the People, but came out of that holy place, and could not return thither again without a new Sacrifice; *but this man after he had offered one Sacrifice, for ever sat down at the right hand of God, Heb. x. 12.* and because he continueth for ever, he hath an unchangeable Priesthood, wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them, Heb. vii. 24, 25. So that Christ by his Death expiated our sins, and confirmed an everlasting Covenant, and being ascended up into Heaven, he there appears in the presence of God for us, and perpetually intercedes in the virtue of his Blood once offered, which is of infinite more value than the repeated Sacrifices of the Law: he procures the pardon of our sins by his death, and dispenses this pardon to us by his Intercession; he sealed that Covenant of Grace by his Blood, and intercedes for us in virtue of his Blood, but still according to the terms and conditions of that Covenant; and this is all we must expect from him as our Mediator.

From what I have now discours'd, it appears how injurious those men are to the Blood of Christ, (how much soever they pretend to magnifie it) who attribute no more to it than a non-imputation

Dr. Owens
Commun.
p. 193.

of sin, * that by his death Christ bearing and undergoing the punishment that was due to us, paying the Ransom that was due for us, delivered us from this condition, (the wrath, and curse, and whole displeasure of God) and thus by the Death of Christ all cause of quarrel and rejection is taken away, but then this will not compleat our acceptation, the old quarrel may be laid aside, and yet no new friendship begun, we may be not sinners, and yet not so far righteous, as to have a right to the Kingdom of Heaven: So that the Blood of Christ only makes us innocent, delivers us from guilt and punishment, but (if we will take the Doctors word for it) it can give us no title to glory, this is owing to the *imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us, to the obedience of his Life*: but you see the Scripture gives a quite different account of it, we are said to be *justified and redeemed by the blood of Christ*; nay, we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. x. 19. which is an allusion to the High Priests entering into the Holy of Holies (which was a Type of Heaven) with the Blood of the Sacrifice; thus by the Blood of Christ we have admission into Heaven it self, though the Dr. says, that the Blood of Christ makes us innocent, but cannot give us a right to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Scripture takes no notice of their artificial method, that the guilt of sin is taken away by the Death of Christ, and that we are made righteous by his Righteousness; but the Blood of Christ is said to justify us, and to give us admission into the holiest of all, into Heaven it self, nay we are made righteous by the death of Christ too, 2 Cor. v. 21. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin,*

and Righteousness for us: that is, though Christ was not made the Righteousness for us, yet he died as a Sacrifice for us, that we might be made Righteousness as we are to the death of Christ, and for our sins: his Blood and efficacy in it to make us Righteous from dead works, living God; and our Righteousness with God, is wholly owing to which he purchas'd and paid for us. but though the pardon of our sins be attributed to the Blood of Christ, I could never perswade myself that it wholly excludes the perfect Obedience of his Life: for the Blood of Christ is accepted in the Beloved, whatever rendered Christ beloved, and gave him something to our acceptance, as he was beloved, we are accepted by his Blood: no man will deny, that God is very pleased with the perfect Obedience of his Life. We know how many blessings were bestowed on the Children of Israel for their Obedience, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were very dear to God, but God was more pleased with the Obedience of Christ, than with the Obedience of any other, and therefore we ought to have no benefit by the Blood of Christ, but by the Obedience of his Life.

sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God by him : that is, though Christ was a very holy Person, yet he died as a Sacrifice for our sins, *the Just for the Unjust*, that we might be reconciled to God : So that our Righteousness as well as Innocence, is owing to the death of Christ, to that Sacrifice he offered for our sins : his Blood had a great virtue and efficacy in it to make us righteous, to purge our Consciences from dead works, that we might serve the living God ; and our Righteousness and acceptance with God, is wholly owing to that Covenant, which he purchas'd and sealed with his Blood.

But though the pardon of our sins, and our Justification be attributed to the Blood of Christ, yet I could never perswade my self that this wholly excludes the perfect Obedience and Righteousness of his Life : for the Apostle tells us that we are *accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6 So that whatever rendered Christ *beloved of God*, did contribute something to our acceptance ; for because he was beloved, we are accepted for his sake, and I think no man will deny, that God was very highly pleased with the perfect Obedience of our Saviours Life.

We know how many blessings God bestowed upon the Children of *Israel* for the sake of their Fathers, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, who were great Examples of Faith and Obedience, which made them very dear to God ; and there is no doubt, but God was more pleased with the Obedience of Christ, than with the Faith of *Abraham*, and therefore we ought not to think that we receive no benefit by the Righteousness of

The vertue of Christ's Sacrifice

Christ, when *Abraham's* Posterity was so blessed for his sake: but then the Righteousness of Christs Life, and the Sacrifice of his Death, do not serve two such different ends as these men fancy, (that the death of Christ removes the guilt of sin, and his Righteousness is imputed to us, to make us righteous) but they both serve the same end, to establish and confirm the Gospel-Covenant: God was so well pleased with what Christ did and suffered, with the Obedience of his Life and death, that for his sake he entred into a *Covenant of Grace* with Mankind; as *Abraham's* Faith was not imputed to his Posterity, as their Act, but for *Abraham's* sake, God entred into Covenant with them and chose them for his peculiar People. The Obedience and Righteousness of Christs Life was one thing which made his Sacrifice so meritorious, which was the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.

And this is the molt that can be made of *Rom. v.18, 19.* Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the Righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life: for as by one mans disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous: there is no necessity indeed of expounding this *ὑπακοή* obedience, of the Righteousness of Christ's Life, or his Active Obedience, for it may very well signifie no more than the obedience of his Death, notwithstanding the Doctors distinction, that doing is one thing, and suffering is another, for the Apostle tells us, that he became obedient unto death, *ὑπακούσας*, *Phil. ii.8.* and his offering himself in Sacrifice is called doing the

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will of God, Heb. x. 9, 10. and whether this be properly said or not, I will leave the Doctor to dispute it with the Apostle; it is plain that in this Chapter there is no express mention made of any other Act of Obedience & Righteousness, whereby we are reconciled to God, but only his dying for us, in vers. 8. the Apostle tells us, *that Christ died for us while we were sinners*, in vers. 9. *that we are justified by his Blood*, in the 10. *that we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, which makes it more than probable, that by his Righteousness and Obedience here, the Apostle understands his Death and sufferings, because this was the Subject of his Discourse: but yet these expressions, *his Righteousness and Obedience*, seem to take in the whole compass of his Obedience in doing and suffering the will of God: and the meaning of the words is this, that as God was so highly displeased with *Adams* sin, that he entailed a great many evils and miseries, and death it self, upon his Posterity for his sake, so God was so well pleased with the Righteousness and Obedience of Christs Life and Death, that he bestows the Rewards of Righteousness on those who according to the strictness and rigour of the Law are not Righteous, that for Christs sake he hath made a new Covenant of Grace, which pardons our past sins and follies, and rewards a sincere though imperfect obedience; for *δικαιοι κατασθένονται*, *shall be made righteous*, is the same with *δικαιωθένται*, *shall be justified*, that is, treated like righteous persons: so that the Righteousness of Christ is not the formal cause of our Justification, that very Righteousness whereby we are righteous, but the Righteous-

Righteousness of his Life and Death is the meritorious cause of that Covenant, whereby we are declared righteous, and rewarded as righteous persons; for the Apostle tells us in Vers. 17. who those are who are thus justified by Christ, and shall Reign with him in Life, not those who are righteous by the imputation of Christs Righteousness to them, but those *who have received the abundance of Grace, and the Gift of Righteousness*, that is, who by the Gospel of Christ, which is the *grace* and the *abundant grace* of God, are made holy and righteous, as God is; which *Righteousness* is called a *Gift*, because it is not owing solely to humane endeavours, but is wrought in us by supernatural means, by those powerful arguments and motives, and divine assistances, which God in infinite love and goodness has afforded the World by Jesus Christ.

This gives a fair account how we may be said *to be made righteous by the Righteousness of Christ*, not that his actual Obedience is reckoned as done by us, (which is impossible) but because we are made righteous both in a proper and forensick sense by the *Gospel-Covenant*, which is wholly owing to the Grace of God, and to the Merits and Righteousness of Christ: the great arguments and motives, and powerful assistances of the Gospel, form our minds to the love and practice of Holiness, and so make us inherently righteous, and the *Grace of the Gospel* accepts and rewards that sincere and Evangelical Obedience, which according to the rigor & severity of the Law could deserve no reward: so that our *righteousness* is wholly owing to *the Righteousness of Christ*, which may in this

and Righteousness?
 sense be said to be imputed to us: which never occurs in Scripture but this Covenant of Grace, which is the Righteousness of Christ, we could lay no claim to Righteousness or Glory.
 so that the Righteousness of Christ, when we speak of the Covenant, by which we are made righteous, we speak of the terms of the Covenant, which have a Righteousness of Christ, which will not be imputed to our Righteousness and our Obedience, the first of the Covenant, the other is the second.

The sum of this Section is, that there is no foundation in reason or nature for any such Union between our Righteousness and Christs Righteousness, as should intitle them to be reckoned as one Righteousness, as many have imagined; but Christs Obedience and Sufferings are the ground of our Justification, and the terms of the Gospel-Covenant: he is the Righteousness of the Covenant, and his Blood is the price of the Covenant, and we must expect our Righteousness from what Christ hath done for us, and to be saved according to the conditions of the Gospel.

this sense be said to be *imputed to us*, (though that phrase never occurs in Scripture) because without this Covenant of Grace, which is founded on the *Righteousness of Christ*, the best man living could lay no claim to Righteousness or future Glory.

So that the *Righteousness of Christ* is our Righteousness, when we speak of the foundation of the Covenant, by which we are accepted, but if we speak of the terms of the Covenant, then we must have a Righteousness of our own, for the Righteousness of Christ will not serve the turn: Christs Righteousness and our own are both necessary to our Salvation, the first as the foundation of the Covenant, the other as the condition of it.

The sum of this Section is this, that there is no foundation in reason or Scripture, to imagine any such Union betwixt Christ and Believers, as should intitle them *to all the personal Righteousness of Christ*, as much as if it had been performed by themselves; but the vertue of Christs Obedience and Sufferings, so far as it concerns our Justification, is contained in the Gospel-Covenant: he is the Mediator of the Covenant, and his Blood is the Blood of the Covenant, and we must expect no other advantage from what Christ hath done and suffer'd, but to be saved according to the gracious terms and conditions of the Gospel.

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SECT IV.

That these men place our Union to Christ before Holiness of Life.

I Have now explained to you the nature of our Union to the Person of Christ, as these men represent it, whereby (they say) we are intitled to all his Excellencies, Graces, Righteousness, Preciousness, &c. and made it appear that there is no foundation for such a notion either in Scripture or Reason; but before I dismiss this, it will be convenient to take notice of the great evil and mischief of this opinion, which may satisfy any considering man (though there were no other evidence of it) how false it is; and I shall observe two things to this purpose: First, That according to this notion men may, nay must be united to Christ, while they continue in their sins, which according to my understanding overthrows all Religion, and destroys the necessary obligations to an holy life. Secondly, That according to these mens discourses no man can certainly tell how to get into Christ, or know whether he be in Christ or not.

As for the first, That men may, nay must be united to Christ, while they continue in their sins, it is easie to produce abundant evidence for the proof of it. * Mr. Shephard tells us expressly, *That Obedience does not make us God's people, or God our God; but he is first our God, (which*

* Sound Believer, p. 321.

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is only by the Covenant of Grace) and hence it is, that he being ours, and we his, we of all others are most bound to obey: as for the obligation to obedience, we will consider that anon, at present it suffices, that we are Gods people, and that by virtue of the Covenant of Grace, before we obey him: the same Author * tells us, *that we are not united to Christ our life by obedience, as Adam was to God by it; but by Faith* (that is by such a Faith of which Obedience is no part, otherwise he opposes a part to the whole, and so the same thing to it self) *and therefore as all actions in living things comes from Union, so all our acts of obedience are to come by Faith, from the Spirit on Christs part, and from Faith on our part, which make the Union:* the meaning of which is this, that we must first be united to Christ by this Faith (of which more anon) before we can do any thing that is good; before this Union *the best actions we can do are sins*, which is a plain demonstration of the truth of this charge, because according to this principle we can do nothing but sin, before we are united to Christ: hence these men constantly place *our Justification before our Sanctification*, that we are first accounted holy by God before we are made holy, now our Justification follows our Union to Christ, and our Sanctification follows our Justification, and therefore we must first be united to Christ, so as to have a title to all the Promises of the Gospel, to Justification and Eternal Life, before we are sanctified, that is, before we are made holy: hence we are told, *that * Holiness is a remote end of vocation, but the next end is to come to Christ:* and the same Author makes

*Pag. 318;

*Pag. 212.

a speech for Christ to a Sinner (so gracious a speech, that among all the invitations of Christ in the Gospel, we find nothing like it) *though thou hast resisted my Spirit, refused my Grace, wearied me with thy iniquities, yet come unto me, and this will make me amends, I require nothing of thee else but to come; for Gods call is out of free Grace, and therefore he calls for no more than only to come up and possess the Lords fulness.*

But not to insist upon some particular sayings, let us consider the whole progress of the Soul (as they represent it) to a closure with Christ, the several steps and degrees whereby men are brought at last to *an Union with the Lord Jesus*, and they are *Conviction, Compunction, Humiliation* and *Faith*, which is the *uniting Grace*; now if there be nothing of forsaking sin included in all this, then men must be united to Christ before they forsake their sins: it were casie to produce the concurrent judgments of many Authors, for what I shall now say, but that would be too tedious, and therefore I shall confine my self to Mr. *Shephards Sound Believer*, as *Orthodox* a Book as ever was writ, and which to this day is in too many peoples hands.

* *Sound Believer*,
p. 68.

Now * *Conviction of sin*, (according to this Author, is a great sense of the evil of sin, and the evil after sin, of its abominable and accursed nature, and those just judgments which follow sin, that the Sinner must die, and that eternally for sin, if it remain in this state it is now in: and no man can deny, but that this is as it ought to be; men must be awakened into a serious consideration of the evil which they have done, and of the punishment

is necessary to our Union with Christ, which they have done; they will reform their lives; if they are out, this is not the end of the way (that is a legal way) but of Conviction: well then, what is the next? why compunction is being damned, when a man is, he sees Death, Wrath, Everlasting punishment, no hope to escape, and therefore does fear; next is sorrow and mourning for sin, when the Soul, or heart is awakened, it therefore grows exceedingly that which perfects this separation from sin; this is for as they speak; but if we take them, by a separation from sin, understand a leaving and forsaking from sin as is common for it is nothing else, but whether not unwilling, that the Lord doth not wound the Soul should first heal it (see the Physician, but that it might see it willing and desirous of a Physician, to come and heal it; it is Christians, that either they are so little they desire not to be healed, they labour to be healed themselves, or they go to the Physician for it, and put on themselves, and put on Christ: so that all separation from sin, is to be content with the power should take

punishment which they have deserved, before they will reform their lives; reform? nay now you are out, this is not the end of Conviction to reform sin, (th: it is a legal way but Compunction is the end of Conviction: well then, what is this Compunction? why compunction is first a great fear of being damned, when a man is thus convinced of sin, he sees Death, Wrath, Eternity, near unto him, and hence hath no hope to escape it, as now he is, and therefore does fear; next to this succeeds a great sorrow and mourning for sin, the Lord having smitten the Soul, or shot the arrows of fear into the Soul, it therefore grows exceeding sad and heavy; and that which perfects this Compunction, is a separation from sin; this is something like, if they mean as they speak; but if you would not mistake them, by a separation from sin, you must not understand a leaving and forsaking sin, but such a separation from sin as is consistent with living in it: for it is nothing else, but * a being willing, or rather not unwilling, that the Lord should take it away: the Lord doth not wound the heart to this end, that the Soul should first heal it self, before it come to the Physician, but that it might seek out, or feeling its need be willing and desirous of a Physician. the Lord Jesus, to come and heal it; it is the great fault of many Christians, that either their wounds and sorrows are so little they desire not to be healed, or if they do, they labour to heal themselves first, before they come to the Physician for it, they will first make themselves holy, and put on their Jewels, and then believe in Christ: so that all he means by a separation from sin, is to be content, that Christ by an irresistible power should take away our sins; by this

* Pag. 86.

* *Pag. 81.* this separation the Soul is cut off from the will to sin, not from all (no nor from any) sin in the will, for that must be mortified by a Spirit of Holiness, after the Soul is implanted into Christ. Now this is down-right non-sense, for he must be a very subtil man who can distinguish between a will to sin, and sin in the will, and all that can be made of it is this, that this separation from sin is a willingness, or rather a not unwillingness, that Christ should take away our sins against our wills; and therefore he does well to tell us, that this separation from sin is no part of our sanctification, as any man would easily have gueſt by his description of it; the whole design of this *Compunction*, of this fear, and sorrow, and separation from sin, is not that we might forsake sin, but to work *humiliation* in us, which is a third step towards an Union with Christ: Now this
* *Humiliation* is the work of the Spirit, whereby

* *Pag. 123.* the Soul being broken off from self-conceit, and self-confidence in any good it hath, or doth, submitteth unto, and lieth under God to be disposed of, as he pleases; this self-confidence, from which the Soul must be broke off, is any hope of pleasing God by Repentance or Reformation, or any thing he can do; for when men feel this *Compunction* of Spirit for their sins, the great danger is, lest they should seek ease by repenting of their sins, and reforming their lives; that as their sins have provoked God to anger against them, so now if they can reform, and leave those sins, or if they repent, and be sorry for them, if now they pray, and hear, and do as others do, they have some hopes (as well they may, if

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if they do all this) *that this will heal their wounds, and pacifie the Lord towards them, when they see there is no peace in a sinful course, they will try if there be any to be found in a good course; this indeed every man naturally would have thought to have been a very good way, but it is a dangerous* Pag. 125.
mistake, for while it is thus with the Soul, he is incapable of Christ, for he that trusts to other things to save him, or makes, himself his own Saviour, or rests in his Duties without a Saviour (that is, according to this Author, all those who repent and reform upon the Convictions of their Consciences) he can never have Christ to save him: So that true humiliation is this, when the Lord Christ hath made the Soul feel, not only its inability to help it self, but also its own unworthiness, that the Lord should help it, that so it may lie down under God to be disposed of as he pleases, that is to be contented to be saved or damned, as shall best please God; and when the soul is brought to this pass, then it is vas capax, a vessel capable (though unworthy) of Grace, and now they are made thus hollow and empty by compunction and humiliation, they are capable of receiving and holding Christ, as a hollow and empty vessel is of receiving and holding Pag. 141.
anything that is put into it: this is a new notion of our Union to Christ, that it is a receiving Christ into us, as a hollow vessel receives any Liquor that is poured into it; however this is a very Philosophical account of the nature of humiliation, that it is to bring a man to such a thorough sense of his inability to please God, that he shall never dare to be so prophane as to attempt it, but must leave repentance and reformation

mation of life to carnal and Christless men; and then to make him so sensible of his own unworthiness, and how just it is with God to damn him, that he shall contentedly submit himself to God to be damned or saved, as he pleases; and now the Soul being thus *empty and hollow* is fit to receive Christ into it, and being grown careless of its Salvation, and indifferent whether it be saved or damned (for it is impossible thus to submit to God, without being indifferent in some measure which God shall chuse) it is a fit object for Mercy: certainly it is a very hard thing to bring any man in his wits to this, and I find by this Author, that God is very hard

*Pag. 128. put to it thus to humble the Soul; *for he is forc'd to irritate and stir up original corruption, to stir the dungbill, (a very unfit office for a holy Being) that so men finding themselves sensibly grow worse and worse every day, may despair of growing better, and leave off such vain attempts, and set down humble under God: nay the Lord loads and tires, and wearies the Soul by its own endeavours, till it can stir no more; that is, when the Soul labours with all its might to repent and reform, the Spirit of God, which should encourage and assist all such pious endeavours, withdraws it self, because it knows the Soul would rest therein without Christ: now I confess, I know not who suffers most by this, the Sinner, who is thus humbled and broken, or God who thus humbles him; for it must needs be as contrary to the holy and merciful Nature of God to use such methods of Humiliation, as it is to the proud heart of man to be thus humbled:

P. 130.

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Thus you see, that *Humiliation* hath nothing to do with Repentance and Reformation of our Lives; for one great end of Humiliation is to cure men of such carnal conceits, as to think to please God by repenting and reforming our sins, and this is the next immediate disposition towards our receiving Christ and closing with him.

For now when the Soul is thus humbled, it is time it should go to Christ, though the truth is, such Souls are so wounded and humbled now, *that they lye dead at Gods feet, and are as unable to believe as they were to humble themselves: and therefore now the Lord takes them up in his Arms, that they may lean and rest upon the bosom of their beloved by Faith.* Now the Form and Essence of Faith, this uniting Grace, consists in this, *that it is the coming of the whole Soul out of it self to Christ: Faith doth nothing for Life, for that is the Law of Works, it only receives him who hath done all for it, it comes out of all it hath or doth unto Christ for Life.* The Soul by sin is averted from God, and turns his back upon God, the turning and coming of the Soul (not unto duties of Holiness, for that is obedience properly, but) unto God in Christ again is properly and formally Faith: So to come to Christ, as to drink in of Christs fulness, is believing in Christ. P. 151

But then Faith is the coming of the whole Soul to Christ, and that is, when the eye of the Soul so sees Christ, and the heart so embraceth and relyeth upon Christ, as that it resteth in Christ, as in its portion and all-sufficient good. This is the Faith which unites us to Christ, and Faith you see hath P. 185.

nothing at all to do with obedience *in uniting us to Christ*; but it perfects this Union between Christ and Believers, while they are as ugly, and deformed, and vicious as may be; very unfit persons methinks to become the Members of so holy an Head.

This is enough to convince any considering man, how false this notion is of our Union to Christ, according to which wicked men, who live in sin, may be united to Christ: for the Scripture places the *formal nature of our Union to Christ in a subjection to his Authority, and obedience to his Laws*, as I have already made it appear; and therefore an holy Life must not only follow our Union to Christ, as an effect of it, but must at least in order of Nature go before it, because by this we are united to Christ. A visible profession of an holy life is necessary to our admission into the Christian Church, which is the Body of Christ; but though this makes us visible Members of Christs Body, and gives us a right to an external Communion, yet we are not real and living Members of Christ, till we sincerely obey him, till our minds are transformed into his Image: our Union to Christ is more or less perfect according to our attainments in true piety and vertue. The first and lowest degree of our Union with Christ is a belief of his Gospel, which in order of Nature must go before obedience to it; but yet it includes a purpose and resolution of obeying it; and in this sense we must be united to Christ, before we can be holy; because this belief of his Gospel is the great Principle of Obedience; as our Savi-

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our tells his Disciples, *Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bring forth fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye, except you abide in me,* John 15. 4. But then our Union is not perfected without actual obedience; this makes us the true Disciples of Christ, when we are fruitful in good works, as he adds in *Vers. 8. Herein is my Father Glorified, that you bring forth much fruit, so shall you be my Disciples.* A belief of the Gospel of Christ, and a purpose to live in obedience to it, is all that can be expected from beginners, but this doth not give us an actual title to all the promises of the Gospel, unless we actually obey it: but when in the strength of this Faith we conquer all the temptations of the World and the Flesh, and improve all the opportunities of doing good, this makes us the Disciples of Christ indeed, and Heirs of Glory: Christ receives bad men as soon as they believe his Gospel, and resolve to be good, but their reward is suspended upon the performance of these vows, and this is no reproach to his Holiness; but nothing can be a greater dishonour to our Saviour, nor a greater contradiction to his Gospel, than to affirm, that wicked men, while they continue such, are actually united to Christ, and thereby have an actual right to pardon and righteousness, and eternal life. St. John, I am sure, understood not this Doctrine, when he told us, *That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all: if we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, (live in any sin) we lye, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another,* 1 Joh. 1. 5, 6, 7.

This Doctrine doth not only take away the necessity of holiness in order to our Union with Christ, but destroys the necessary obligations to holiness and obedience for the future, and so thrusts Holiness quite out of the Christian Religion. Our Union to Christ is perfected while we are unholy, and when we are united to Christ, there is less need of Holiness than before; for now the Merits and Satisfaction of Christs Death is imputed to us to remove the guilt of sin, and to deliver us from the punishment of it; and his actual obedience is imputed to us to make us righteous, and to give us an actual right to glory: So that if men will obey Christ out of a principle of good nature, and thankfulness to him, they may; but according to this notion there can be no necessity of it, because they are delivered from the wrath of God, and have a right to eternal life without it: And this is a plain demonstration, that these notions are so far from being an essential part of the Christian Religion, that they overthrow all Religion, by leaving it at every mans liberty, whether he will worship and obey God or not: but I have * discoursed this at large already in the examination of Dr. Owens Reasons for the necessity of Holiness and Obedience.

§ Chap. 2.

SECT.

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That according to these Principles, there is no certain way of getting into Christ, or of knowing whether we are in Christ or not.

THUS I have made good the first charge, that according to this notion of our Union to Christ men may, nay must be united to Christ (if ever they be united) while they continue in sin, and this is a great reproach to the Person and Gospel of our Saviour; the other thing which I charged upon this notion, is a more immediate injury to men, as exposing them to perpetual doubts and jealousies about their Salvation, viz. that according to these principles no man can certainly tell how to get into Christ, or know whether he be in Christ or not: And if I can make this appear, it will be a sufficient reason for every man to reject it, who hath any care of his Salvation, or any regard to the peace and quiet of his own mind.

First then according to these Principles there is no certain way to get into Christ: Suppose a sinner, who hears of those great Priviledges, which are consequent upon our Union to Christ, should inquire what course he should take to be united to Christ, and to have a right and interest in all the Excellencies, Preciousness, Graces, and

Righteousness of the Lord Jesus; the method prescribed in order to this is *Conviction, Compunction, Humiliation, and Faith*, which is the *uniting Grace*; now I observe first, that a man is *passive* in all this, and can contribute nothing to it himself any otherwise than as he is acted by an irresistible power, and it is a vain thing to give such rules and directions as no man can follow; this only tells us by what methods God unites us to Christ; not what we *must do*, but what we *must suffer* in order to this Union. *A Sinner may stir up in himself some natural conviction of sin, some natural fear and sorrow, &c.* and in a sense of this may set upon the work of reformation, of leaving his sins, and performing duties, but all this they tell us is to no purpose; for unless this conviction, and compunction, and humiliation be wrought in us by the irresistible power of the Spirit of God (which no man can possibly tell, whether it be or not) it is not of the right stamp, and will avail us nothing: So that the sinner hath nothing to do but to sit still, and patiently expect till God will do all for him.

But secondly, Suppose a man have this *conviction, compunction and humiliation*, is this a sufficient reason to lay hold on Christ by the hand of Faith? by no means; the end of *conviction* is *compunction*, and the end of *compunction* is *humiliation*, and all this carries us no nearer to Christ, than * quietly to lye down before God, that he may do what he will with us, * turning the other cheek unto the Lord even smiting of us, acknowledging that if the Lord shew mercy it will be wonderful, if not yet the Lord is righteous, and therefore we have

* Sound Believer,
p. 126.

* Pag. 133.

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have no reason to quarrel against him for denying special mercy to those to whom he does not owe a bit of bread: and now the Soul is indeed humbled, because it submits to be disposed of as God pleases; that is, to be saved or damned: so that this conviction, compunction and humiliation contribute nothing to our Union with Christ, but their whole vertue consists in bringing us to such a temper of mind, as to be content either to have Christ, or to go without him, as God shall please:

*Pag. 137.

* Humiliation makes the Soul in the sense of its own infinite vileness and unworthiness not to quarrel at the Lord, and Devil-like grow fierce and impatient before and against the Lord, in case he should never help it, never pity it, never succour it. * And now

*Pag. 138.

you shall see, if the Lord intend good, he will by this do thee good, and this is all men get by Humiliation, that if the Lord intend to do them good, this is the way, in which he will do it, but though they be humbled, they cannot be sure, whether God intend to do them good or not: and therefore

*Pag. 144.

we are told, that * we are as much bound to submit to God, whether he will save or damn us, as we are to submit to the disposal of God, as to any common mercy: though you must pray for mercy, it must be with submission to the good will of the Lord, saying the Lords will is good (whether it be to save or damn) but mine is evil, though it be to be saved, and to have Jesus Christ: nay we are much more bound to submit our selves to God, whether he will save or damn us, than we are to submit to him in the lesser concerns of this life: *

*Pag. 145.

For if it be pride to murmur in case the Lord deny you smaller matters, the offals of this life,

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life dost thou not see, that it is far greater pride for thee to sink, and quarrel with him, if he denies thee greater, the things of another life? is he bound to give thee greater, who doth not owe thee the least? the Lord gives you life, blessed be his name, but you ask for treasures of Grace and mercy (now God hath given you life, you would feign live for ever, an unpardonable fault this!) thousands of pounds, Christ himself, and all that he is worth, and the Lord seems to deny you, and now you sink, and grow sullen, may not the Lord now say, was there ever such pride and insolence? as to be unwilling to be damned for ever; though I dare say this is not the pride which cast the Apostate Angels out of Heaven. So that though conviction and compunction, and humiliation be the only way to come to Christ, yet it is such a way, as brings us never the nearer him; when all this is done we are where we were: before we were humbled it was at the Lords good pleasure, whether we should have Christ or not, and so it is still.

What then is to be done further in order to our closing with Christ by Faith? for hitherto there is no foundation for our Faith: why you must not catch at Christ, but stay till God give Christ to you, till God take you up in his arms, that you may lean and rest upon the bosom of your beloved through Faith; you must stay till God give you a particular call to come to Christ, and whether that will be ever or never, no man can tell: many a wounded sinner will be scrambling after Christ from some general reports of him (such as his Gospel makes) before the day and hour of Gods glorious

P. 153.

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 I pray all, now for any man to receive
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and gracious call, now for any man to receive Christ, or to come to Christ before he is called, is presumption (I unpardonable presumption too to attempt impossibilities, for no body can come till he is called) no man should come unless first called (and therefore no crime to stay away) as it is in calling to an ordinary office, so it is in our calling much more to special Grace, no man takes this honour to himself but he that is called of God, Hebr. 5.4. (it is great presumption to usurp the office of a Priest, or Prophet, or King, without a lawful designation to such an office, and therefore it is much greater presumption to attempt to be a good man and a good Christian without such a particular call) for what hath any man to do with Christ, to make himself a Son of God and Heir of Glory (to take care to please God, and to make himself happy) but he that is called of God? Well Sinner, wait with patience till thou art called, and so thy work is at an end for this time.

But how shall a poor humbled Sinner know when he is called, that then he may come to Christ? why you must have a care, that you do not mistake the general offers of the Gospel for this special call, for they are not a sufficient foundation for our Faith in coming to Christ, though they are made to the weary and the heavy laden too: men cannot, men will not come at such a call, and indeed they have no reason to do it. For Christ is not intended for all, and therefore though he be offered to all in the Gospel, yet it would be great presumption for every one to lay hold on him: for Christ doth not immediately offer himself to all men, as a Saviour, whereby they

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p. 75.
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may be encouraged to serve him as a King (that is he does not promise Salvation and Eternal Life in the Gospel with a design, that every one that will, should take encouragement from these promises to obey and serve him) but first as a King, commanding them to cast away their Weapons, and stoop under his Scepter, acknowledging that if ever he save me, I will bless him, if he damn me his name is righteous in so dealing with me: the meaning of which is, that every man is invited in the Gospel to submit himself to the mercy of Christ, but then Christ reserves a liberty to himself to save or damn, as he pleases; and this is all the encouragement the Gospel gives us. These are hard terms, and such as sound more like the arbitrary will of an haughty and imperious Lord, than the conditions of a gracious and merciful Saviour.

Ibid. p. 85.

What then must we do now? why the only remedy is to venture and try, God hath elected but few and Christ hath shed his blood for few, and therefore we must venture, (and a hard venture it is, where there is such great odds against us, and yet our eternal happiness depends upon the success, too great a stake for such a venture!) as many men among us do now, who hearing of one good living fallen, twenty of them will go and seek for it, although they know only one shall have it, (though did they know, it were irrevocably determined, who should have it, none of them would stir, but wait till the news were brought them; good God what Merchant-Adventurers are poor Sinners, who after all their seeking for Christ are in such danger of missing him!) or as the Lepers in Samaria,

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Getting into Christ.

if we are not sure we must die, if we go any further we may live: what a condition of desperate men, as it looks upon us all to be. No previous disposition can give encouragement to come to Christ; but to do it, after this we must expect we are but probationers for Christ. It is a great danger of missing him; as twenty Competitors are of it, which only one can have; and the wonderful assurance is self-evident. For if you come to Christ, because you think that is, if you come to Christ, because you are already come, or because you are already come, and Heavenly Spirit is in you, then you may many times at a distance from Christ, Christ: this is a hard saying, come to Christ, we may keep him, may though we come, because we are come already: it is time to despair of ever being sure we are self is no security. Nothing then but a particular call to come to Christ: when the Spirit gives a general call (which signifies nothing) when the Soul sees that the Lord is calling out me in special to believe: and of the elect will not be much more God, so long as they think that they are more to me than to any representation of mercy than what will be the Spirit of Christ in

ria, if we stay here we must die, if we go out to the Camp of the Assyrians we may live: which is the resolution of desperate men, as it seems the Gospel condemns us all to be.

No previous disposition can give us any encouragement to come to Christ; *humiliation* cannot do it, after this we must expect a call still, we are but probationers for Christ still, and are in as great danger of missing him, as any one of the twenty Competitors are of missing that living, which only one can have; and which is more wonderful, *assurance it self* cannot do it, * For if you come to Christ, because you have assurance (that is, if you come to Christ, because you are sure you are already come) or because you feel such and such graces, and Heavenly impressions of Gods Spirit in you, then you may many a day and year keep at a distance from Christ, and live without Christ: this is a hard saying, that though we come to Christ, we may keep at a distance from him, nay though we come, because we are sure, we are come already: it is time now to give over, and despair of ever being sure, when *assurance it self* is no security.

* Sound Believer: pag. 246.

Nothing then but a particular call is a good reason to come to Christ: when the Spirit of God makes the general call (which signifies nothing) particular, when the Soul sees, that the Lord in special means me, singles out me in special to believe: for otherwise the Souls of the elect will not be much moved with the call of God, so long as they think, that the Lord offers no more mercy to me than to any reprobate (that is no more mercy than what will damn them) and therefore the spirit of Christ makes the call

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particular, I have called thee by Name, Isa. xliiii. 1. He calleth all his Sheep by name, John x. 5. not by their Christian name, (as he well observes, for they cannot be Christians before they come to Christ, and that must be after this call) but as the Lord from before all Worlds wrote down their names in the Book of Life, and loves them in special, so in Vocation (the first opening of Election) the Lord makes this Call special; and so special, as if it were by name: Look, saith the Lord Jesus, how I have left thousand thousands in the World, and have had greater cause so to have left thee, (this is free Grace indeed) but behold I am come unto thee, O come thou unto me. So that it is impossible for a Sinner to do any thing in order to his Union to Christ; there is no foundation of our Faith in Christ, but this particular call, and we must wait patiently for it, and be contented too if it never come.

And when the Soul hath this *particular Call*, suppose it should suspect this *Call*, for a delusion, what course can it take to satisfy it self, that this is the call of the Spirit of God, and not the cheat and imposture of an Enthusiastick fancy? Truly, none that I know of; if this calling by name will not satisfy it, there is no other way but to call for the Book of Election, and see whether its name be enrolled there: the best of it is, that all that are called must come, and therefore they need enquire no farther.

But secondly, Though we know not how to get into Christ, it would be some comfort to know that we are in him, but this is as impossible as the other: as the onely Foundation of our Faith in coming to Christ, (according to these mens notions)

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notions) is *this special and particular call of the Spirit*, so the onely infallible assurance any one can have that *he is in Christ*, is the testimony of the Spirit, that Spirit of Adoption which teaches us to cry, *Abba Father*; and yet God does not afford this testimony of the Spirit to all, but suffers many good Christians to walk in darkness, and hides his face from them, and conceals the evidences of his eternal love, for no other reason but *because they are * desirous of it, and would be quiet if they should* * Sound Believers; know it: this is somewhat hard measure; but suppose you have, or think you have this Testimony of the Spirit, how can you be sure that it is not a cheat and delusion, the imposture of the Devil, or of your own self-flattering imaginations?

To satisfy this Scruple we are directed to marks and evidences, and thus this *infallible assurance* from the Testimony of the Spirit, must in its last resolve be founded upon some *moral evidence*; as it is with the Church of Rome, who after a great noise and cry of *Infallibility*, are at last forc'd to resolve their Faith into some motives of *Credibility*, or to dance round in an endless Circle.

Well, but let us consider what are the marks and evidences of our *being in Christ*: and now you must enquire, whether you have the Spirit of Christ, and it is just as easie to know this, as whether you be in Christ: But are you true Believers? Is your Faith of the right stamp? Is it wrought by the Almighty Power of God? Or is it such an easie, common-presumptuous, false Faith as that which is in the generality of men? And this is as easie to know

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sign of it; we are united to Christ before we are holy, as appears from what I have already discoursed, and therefore an unholy man may be united to Christ, and how then can Holiness be the only sure mark of our Union to Christ? Indeed they tell us that Holiness does necessarily follow our Union to Christ, but no man knows how long it may be before it follows, and yet all this while such a Person is united to Christ; at best, this gives evidence but to one part of the Question, a holy life may be a good evidence that such a man is in Christ, but the want of it is no certain evidence that a man is not in Christ, and therefore this mark may be rejected by any one who hath no mind to it.

Nay secondly, According to these mens principles, we cannot tell whether we are holy or not, till we know whether we are in Christ or not; our Union to Christ must be an evidence of our Holiness, not our Holiness an evidence of our Union to Christ: till we are united to Christ, we can do nothing to please God; the best actions of Christless and unregenerate men are but *splendida peccata, glittering impieties*, which may appear so fair and lovely, that they may deceive both other men and themselves for the true fruits of the Spirit, but yet are odious and abominable to God, because *the person* who does them is *out of Christ*: our Persons must be first accepted in Christ, and then our services: we cannot judge of Holiness by the external performance of any duty, nor by the inward sence of our own minds, but must first know whether we are in Christ, whether our *persons* be accepted in him, before we

can tell whether any thing we do be good and acceptable to God : and this is a plain demonstration that Holiness cannot be an evidence of our Union to Christ, because we must first know our Union to Christ, before we can know that we are holy.

And thirdly, At other times these men make the work of *Sanctification in this life* so imperfect, and so like an *unsanctified state*, that it is impossible to distinguish a sanctified and unsanctified man ; and upon this account holiness and sanctification must needs be a very sorry evidence of our Union to Christ, when it is so imperfect, that it cannot be known ; for that which is an evidence of another thing, ought to be very evident it self.

An unregenerate man is under the *Law of Sin*, under the reigning power of it, and a regenerate man (as they describe him) is in a state as like this, *as one Egge is like another* : for a regenerate man may be carnal, sold under sin ; that is, a Slave and Captive to it ; he may do those things which he allows not, nay those things which he hates ; that is, he may sin against the clearest convictions of Conscience, and sense of duty ; he may neglect to do those things which he knows he ought to do ; and do those things which he knows he ought not to do ; he may find a Law in his Members, that when he would do good, evil is present with him ; a Law in his Members warring against the Law of his Mind, which brings him into captivity to the Law of sin, that is in his Members : for so they tell us that St. Paul complains of all this in the Person of a regenerate man, in Rom. vii. Now an unregenerate man does

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does the very same, and indeed cannot do much worse; *he sins against his Conscience, is brought in- to captivity to sin, and is over-power'd by indwelling sin; he finds a great many natural fears and terrors, when he is tempted to sin, which give some check to him, and make him sin against his own will, with some unwillingness and reluctancy; he approves the Law of God as just and equal, his Conscience assents to it, but there is a strong byas upon his will, which runs counter to all these holy Commands, and makes him a Slave and Captive to his lusts;* Now not to dispute at present which of these two the Apostle means in *Rom. vii.* I think it is hard to assign any difference between them, the *regenerate man* according to this description is full as bad as the *unregenerate man*, or if there be any difference, the *regenerate man* is the worse of the two, *because in the regenerate man the Spirit is led into captivity, but in the unregenerate man only natural Conscience, which is a much weaker Principle, and so is capable of a better excuse, is led into Captivity;* but which of these two it is, no man can tell; and therefore a regenerate man hath great reason to fear that he may be unregenerate, and an unregenerate man hath as much reason to hope that he may be regenerate: and what becomes then of this evidence of Sanctification to prove our Union to Christ, when Sanctification it self cannot be distinguish'd from an unsanctified State: * *Dr. Fa-*

* *Rom. 8. p. 182.*

comb in his Discourse of the Law of Sin, attempts to assign the difference *between the Law of sin, as it is in the regenerate, and as it is in the unregenerate;* and hath given us such a Description of an unregenerate State, that I think there is scarce

such an unregenerate man in the World; and yet if we must judge what a regenerate man is by inverting the Character of the unregenerate, he is by odds much the worse man.

As first, *When the whole bent and tendency of the heart is towards sin, when the propensities of the Soul thereto, are entire and unmixt, there it is the Law of sin, and the Law of sin which is proper to the unregenerate:* but is every one a regenerate man then, who hath some good inclinations and propensities in him? who hath some wouldings and velleities to that which is good? It is to be hoped then, as many bad men as there are, there are few unregenerate men in the World.

Secondly, Which he tells us is the *explication* of the former, (as indeed I think it needs some explication) *when all the several faculties of the Soul are altogether on sins side, and wholly take its part, then it is the Law of sin, and that which is proper to the unregenerate: where the understanding gives in its final and positive dictate, that sin is good, represents it as eligible to the will, upon this closes with it, embraces it, cleaves to it, the affections (desire, joy, delight) run out upon it, where it is thus, the case is determined:* Yea without controversie, but where shall we find such a man? it is so far from being true, that there are such unregenerate men, that I believe there never was such a man born: there are too many who chuse evil, though they know it to be evil, for the seeming advantages of profit or pleasure it brings with it; but to chuse evil, as believing it to be good, and to rejoyce and delight in it as good and eligible for it self, is such an unregenerate state, as the Devil himself never yet

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yet arrived at; for though he be a very wicked Spirit, yet he is no Fool or Sot, as those must be, who mistake evil for good in such plain and palpable instances: the Heathens themselves at this rate were all regenerate men, for their Consciences accused them for doing evil, *Rom.ii.* they knew good to be good, and evil to be evil, though they did not act agreeably to this knowledge: there never was such a man as he describes, when he tells us, * *That sin comes to the sinner, and says, Art thou willing that I should rule? Yes (saith he) with all my heart; I like thy Commandments and Government, I am thine, and submit to thee, to be at thy dispose, I here swear fealty and allegiance to thee, &c.* This Oath, &c. might very well have been spared, for there is enough in all Conscience without it: and yet if this be the principal difference between the regenerate and unregenerate man, that the unregenerate man chuses sin, as believing it to be good, and the regenerate man chuses sin, though he knows it to be evil, it is plain that the regenerate man is much the worse, because his sins have the greatest aggravation that any sins are capable of, which the sins of an unregenerate man have not, *viz.* that they are sins against knowledge, and so according to our Saviours reasoning, this regenerate man will be beaten with more stripes; I doubt not but in this description he wrongs the unregenerate man very much, but yet he makes the regenerate man ten times more the child of wrath than the other.

But then Thirdly, *The Law of sin hath different workings in the People of God than in others;* this working of the Law of sin in the people of God,

let it be what working he will, methinks is an ill thing, and makes Sanctification a very sorry Evidence; but let us hear how it is.

First, *Where sin is committed industriously and designedly, there it is the Law of sin, and which is peculiar to the graceless*: so that unless men be very cunning at the trade of sin, and lay projects and designs of sinning, they are not under the Law of sin, as it is peculiar to the graceless; Grace is very consistent with taking all fair opportunities of sinning, so we do not design it before hand.

Secondly, *When the temptation easily prevails, and there is little or no opposition made to sin, then it is the Law of sin, as it works in the Unregenerate*: this is an argument indeed that a man is a willing Slave, but when a man is conquered by a temptation, though he make some resistance, it is an argument that sin is his Master, which rules and governs, especially if this be often; and such a man surely is none of Christs Freemen.

And therefore not to fail, Thirdly, *When sin carries it in spite of all opposition, then it is the Law of sin, and the power of sin: that is, against all external discouragements, all the threatenings of the Law of God, the Scepter of the Gospel, the Love and Mercy of God, or his Wrath and Justice, the Death, Sufferings, Agonies, Wounds, Blood of Jesus Christ, the reproof of the Word, Ministers, Christians; his own resolutions, vows, promises purposes, &c.* So that it seems when sin carries it in despite of all external oppositions only, it is the mark of an unregenerate man, but when it carries it both against external and internal oppositions, that is a sign of a regenerate man: for a regenerate man has

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has the same external oppositions to preserve him from sin, that an unregenerate man hath; and besides these, he hath the internal oppositions, the checks of his own Conscience, &c. which he says the unregenerate man has not.

And fourthly, *When it is sinning, and no sense of sin, no after repentance for it, then it is the Law of Sin*: now what bad man is there, who does not at one time or other repent of his sins, and complain of them, and how many are there that repent of their sins, and make large confessions of them, and yet return to them again: so that, there are no men but do at one time or other express some sorrow for their sins, (which he calls Repentance) and there are a great many who pretend thus to be sorry for their sins, who, it is to be feared, are never the better men for it: and yet were there any such, who sin without any sense of it, they would be much better than these regenerate men, who feel the gripings of their Consciences for sin, and yet return to it.

The result is this, That there is no great matter to chuse between the regenerate and the unregenerate man, only (as they order the matter) the regenerate man hath the better name, but is the worse man: that if we come to external evidences, the regenerate man hath all the reason in the world to fear that he is unregenerate; and the unregenerate man hath some little reason to hope that he is regenerate; and is not Sanctification an excellent mark now of our Union to Christ, when a regenerate man may be full as bad or worse than the unregenerate? Indeed it is wonderful to consider how little a matter will serve

Shepherds
Saints
Jewel,
p. 192.

for an evidence of Grace (after all their talk of Sanctification) when they come to administer comfort to distressed Consciences: *Ob! saith the Soul, I find sin prevail, and how can I be comforted?* (not by the mark of Sanctification sure!) *Answ. I will subdue your iniquities, and cast your sins into the midst of the Sea.* *Object. But the Devil will be busie with me, where-ever I go.* *Answ. God hath said it, I will tread down Satan under your feet.* *Object. But I cannot go to God by Prayer to fetch comfort:* (Comfort? What hast thou to do with comfort? Get quit of thy sins first, and then it is time enough for comfort.) *Answ. Though it be so, yet believe, and thou shalt have thy desire:* (but I doubt the Soul that cannot pray, cannot believe neither.) *Object. But I am afraid I shall fall away from God:* (afraid of it? thou art fallen away from God already, if sin prevail so much, for sin is the great Apostacy from God.) *Answ. None can pluck thee out of Christs hands, neither sin nor the Devil.* (But how if they be not in Christs hands yet, sin I doubt may keep them out, and if God cut off barren Branches from this spiritual Vine, there is some danger that putrid and rotten Branches will not escape) *And God hath said, I have made an everlasting Covenant with thee, that I will not turn away from thee, to do thee good.* *Object. This is good news, had I a right to the promise, but alas! I cannot believe, and take a naked promise.* *Answ. Dost thou desire to believe, and to have Christ?* *And say thus, If it were possible Christ and Heaven should be separated, I would rather desire Christ without Heaven, than Heaven without Christ.* *Object. But this is a hard matter, and I cannot say I truly*

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truly desire Christ on such terms as I should. (This saying is the best sign of Grace I have met with yet; for it is an argument he is an honest man, who will not contradict the natural sense of his mind, and say he can do that which is impossible to be done: for it is a very odd proposal in order to comfort a poor Soul, that he must be willing to be damned with Christ, before he must take comfort in hopes of being saved by him.)

Ans. But is it the grief of thy heart that thou canst not deny thy self? And desirest thou rather than be separated from Christ, to close with Christ upon any terms? Object. Alas! I am so far from being

grieved as I ought, that I rather find a heart that will not grieve and mourn for sin, &c. (certainly they are at cross purposes, their Objections and Answers do so ill agree; what's matter for mourning for sin, man? Canst thou desire to have Christ upon any terms, though it be to be damned with him?)

Ans. Hast thou any will to it? Mark the place, And whosoever will, let him take of the Waters of Life freely: not that every one that will have Christ shall have him, but art thou willing to part with thy sins? But the poor Soul saith again, I fear I shall never do this: But art thou willing that Christ should make thee willing (against thy wil) and pitch thee upon a promise, and hold thee there: (for shame, poor Soul refuse not this) then comfort thy self, thou hast a right to Gods Promises. Thus this evidence of Sanctification is dwindled away into a desire to be willing nay into a desire to be made willing; and he is a strange man who cannot go so far.

But then fourthly, I observe further, That when

when they have a mind to take down the confidence of men, who are apt to presume too soon, that their condition is good, they do so magnifie the attainments of Hypocrites, who shall never go to Heaven, that it is impossible for any sanctified man to do more than an Hypocrite may do; so that notwithstanding any Evidences of Sanctification, which he can discover in himself, for ought he or any body else can tell, he may be a Hypocrite still, which quite spoils the Evidence of Sanctification, because we cannot distinguish a sanctified man from a Hypocrite.

Shepherds
Sincere
convert.
P. 94, &c.

Thus for Example: *One may plead, I have left my sins I once lived in, and am now no Drunkard, no Swearer, no Lyar: I answer, Thou mayest be washed from the mire (the pollution of the World) and yet be a Swine in Gods account* (which he proves from 2 Pet. ii. 20. where the Apostle tells them, *That if they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ, and are again intangled therein, and overcome, (if they return to their old vices) then their latter end is worse than the beginning; which is point-blank contrary to what he affirms, That those who have escaped these pollutions, and are not yet intangled again in them, may notwithstanding that be Swine in Gods account, for so he adds, Thou mayst live a blameless, innocent, honest, smooth life, and yet be a miserable Creature. But I pray, (saith such a man) and that often; So thou mayst, and yet never be saved, Isa. i. 11. To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices? To great purpose sure, when they'r offer'd by men of blameless, innocent, honest, smooth lives, the want of which made those sacrifices abominable to God.*

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But I fast sometimes ; So did the Scribes and Pharisees twice a week, but it was to devour Widows Houses, which was not the fast of an honest innocent man : But I bear the Word of God, and like the best Preachers ; So did the stony ground, who heard the word with joy, and for a season believed ; and this had been well, and a good sign of grace, if it had continued. I read the Scripture often ; so did the Pharisees, who were so perfect in the Bible, that Christ needed but say, It hath been said of old times, for they knew the Text without intimation : Men of prodigious Memories certainly, better than any concordance ; but though Knaves may read the Scripture, and be never the better for it, yet good men may read it to good purpose, and therefore I hope reading the Scripture is no argument that a man is a Hypocrite, because the Pharisees were. But I am grieved, and am sorrowful, and repent of my sins ; so did Judas ; but he hanged himself, and that surely could be no true repentance. But I love good men, and their company ; so did the foolish Virgins ; but they slept, and suffered their Lamps to go out, which I hope all that love good men do not. But God hath given me much knowledge ; that thou mayst have, and never be saved : yes, and twenty good things more, but if a blameless honest man have the keeping of this knowledge, it is never the worse for him. But I keep the Lords day strictly ; so did the Jews, whom yet Christ condemned : Had he been as well acquainted with the Scriptures as the Pharisees were, he would not have said that the Jews kept the Lords day ; however this is one good thing, which doth well in the company of more, though it will not justify a man, when it is alone. But I have many
good

good desires and endeavours to get to Heaven; these thou and thousands may have, and miss of Heaven: and yet when he was in a more gentle humour, he told the poor doubting Soul, that desire, nay that a desire only to desire at two or three removes, was enough.

But many do duties without life or zeal, I am zealous; so was Jehu (to destroy the Worship of Baal, and to retain Jeroboams Calves) and so was Paul while a Pharisee (in persecuting the Christian Church, and therefore an universal, and religious, and well-governed zeal for God can be no sign of Grace.) But I am constant and persevere in godly courses; so did the young man, all these things have I keep from my youth (only he left Christ for the sake of his riches, and so did not persevere) But some men are conscious to themselves of their own hypocrisie, but I do all with a good heart for God: So thou mayst think of thy self, and be deceived; and if this be an objection, let a man have what marks he will, the objection will still be good, and so all evidences signifie nothing; for after all it may be objected, That a man may be deceived in it, and think he hath these marks, when he hath them not.) There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof is death, thou mayst live so as to deceive thy self and others, and yet prove an Hypocrite: as if becaule some men may think themselves good, who are in a bad way, no man could ever be sure, that he is in the right; and thus farewell all evidences.

But after all this, it would be worth the while to know how to distinguish a regenerate from an unregenerate man; and that he tells us may be done

if one being in Christ, let him know so much, yet he is in some way is now is very strange, What is it and do never so much and yet live in sin? What live a blameless, innocent life, and yet live in some one sin? yet suppose he did, a regenerate man in captivity in the law of sin, and yet tolerance? but then an unregenerate man is poor in spirit, and so carried out of himself: That is if an unregenerate man is conscious to himself that he have a good heart, he seeks a good self, and in all he doth, and then want of all good, which is true poverty. So that according to this discourse mark of a regenerate man is good in himself or if he have and think he hath none, either is a very odd sign of Grace.

But then an unregenerate man has he never gets into Christ, never at rest and lodging in Jesus Christ, having had been believing, and would have done the business, so that any man should be damned by other Metaphor of lodging and lodging in Christ: men in distress, all unregenerate men who they have comfort from Christ, they have Salvation from Hell (and I think they have a contentment) but Christ himself is not content and without Salvation.

done thus, *An unregenerate man*, let him go never so far, do never so much, yet he lives in some one sin or other; this now is very strange, *What go never so far? and do never so much? and yet live in some one sin or other?* What live a blameless, innocent, honest, smooth life, and yet live in some one sin or other? and yet suppose he did, a regenerate man may be in captivity to the law of sin, and pray what's the difference? but then *an unregenerate man cannot be poor in spirit, and so carried out of all duties to Christ*: That is if an unregenerate man do good, he is conscious to himself that he doth it, if he have a good heart, he feels a good heart in himself, and in all he doth, and therefore feels not a want of all good, which is true poverty of spirit: So that according to this discourse, the surest mark of a regenerate man is either to have no good in himself, or if he have any, to be mistaken and think he hath none, either of which I think is a very odd sign of Grace.

But then *an unregenerate man comes unto Christ, but he never gets into Christ, never takes up his eternal rest and lodging in Jesus Christ only*: I thought coming had been believing, and that believing, would have done the business, and if so, God forbid that any man should be damned for want of that other Metaphor of taking up his eternal rest and lodging in Christ: men in distress of Conscience (that is, all unregenerate men under such distress) if they have comfort from Christ they are contented, if they have Salvation from Hell by Christ they are contented (and I think they have some reason then to be contented) but Christ himself (that is, without comfort and without Salvation) contents them not.

not. Now to be contented with Christ without comfort, and without salvation, is so far from being the mark of an unregenerate man, that I am not yet satisfied that it is the mark of an unreasonable man.

Now are not these men, do you think, great friends to sanctification, who make all the parts of sanctification, *the reformation of our lives, an innocent and blameless Conversation, Fasting, Prayer, Hearing, Reading, Conversing with good Men, zeal for God, perseverance in well-doing, honest and sincere intentions in all we do*, no more than the marks of Hypocrites, and give no better marks of a regenerate man, than to be sensible of no good in himself, (and then he must either have none, or be a Fool, though having none is the surest way not to be sensible of it) and to take up his eternal rest in Christ, and to be contented with Christ without comfort, and without salvation.

Page. 167.

And now I shall conclude this Section with a remarkable passage in the *Sincere Convert*, whereby it will evidently appear what these men think of sanctification: there we have an account what course some men take to secure their eternal happiness: *that when they find themselves tired and weary of themselves, and bearing that only Christ can save them, they go to Christ to remove those sins which tired and loaded them, that he would enable them to do better than formerly: if they get these sins subdued and removed and if they find power to do better, then they hope to be saved*, (here is the evidence of sanctification) *whereas* (as he adds) *thou maist be damned, and go to the Devil at last, though thou dost escape all the pollutions of the World, and that not from thy self,*

of our being in Christ, and by our strength, but from Jesus Christ, who is with you for ever, if with your sins mortified and the reason is, because this is not juice from him to maintain us (stock of Graces) alas! be it Member nor Branch in this Tree grows to be one with Christ. So the evidence is no evidence of our will; we may only grasp at while, as the Ivy doth about the united to him, and become one now we must return where the testimony of the Spirit, with evidence, that is, to private Sanctification can be no evidence to Christ.

Good God! Into what do these men lead poor di can direct them to no certain Christ, nor how to know Christ, or not: and now we finds these men are to a hol at holiness is not antecedent ion with Christ, but they on necessary mark and evidence they will not allow it this a certain evidence of our may prove us united to Christ, not as a Branch is united I hope this will justify any opinions as undermining the of Christianity.

Self, and thy own strength, but from the knowledge of Jesus Christ, wo to you for ever, if you die in this state, (with your sins mortified and subdued by Christ) and the reason is, because this is to come to Christ to suck juice from him to maintain his own Berries, (his own stock of Graces) alas ! he is but the Ivy, he is no Member nor Branch in this Tree, and hence he never grows to be one with Christ. So that holiness and obedience is no evidence of our Union to Christ, though we fetch strength from Christ to do his will ; we may onely grasp about Christ all this while, as the Ivy doth about the Oak, but never be united to him, and become one with him : so that now we must return where we began, and stick to the *testimony of the Spirit*, without any external evidence, that is, to private Enthusiasms, for Sanctification can be no evidence of our Union to Christ.

Good God ! Into what Mazes and Labyrinths do these men lead poor distressed Souls ! They can direct them to no certain way of getting in- to Christ, nor how to know whether they are in Christ, or not : and now we may plainly see what friends these men are to a holy life : they all agree that holiness is not antecedently necessary to our Union with Christ, but they only pretend to make it a necessary mark and evidence of our Union, and yet they will not allow it this priviledge neither, to be a certain evidence of our Union to Christ ; it may prove us united to Christ, as the Ivy is to the Oak, not as a Branch is united to the Vine ; and I hope this will justifie any mans zeal against such opinions as undermine the very foundati- ons of Christianity.

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The Gospel method of Salvation is very plain and easie : those great Miracles our Saviour wrought, and his Resurrection from the Dead, are the foundation of our Faith, a sufficient Reason to believe that he came from God, and declared his will to the World : a publick Profession of this Faith in our Baptism makes us the visible Members of his Body, which is his Church, and a sincere obedience to his Gospel makes a real union between Christ and us, and entitles us to all the promises of the Gospel : and every man may as certainly know whether he be thus united to Christ, as he can feel the motions of his own mind, as he can know what he loves, and hates, and chuses, and what the course of his life and actions are, and there is no need of any Revelation, of any private Testimony of the Spirit to assure men of this, no more than there is to assure them of any thing which is evident to their outward or inward senses.

The *Testimony of the Spirit* concerns the general Adoption of Christians for the Sons of God, not to testify to any particular man, that he is a good Christian, or in a state of Grace : that is, it is not a private, but a publick testimony given to the whole Christian Church : that holy Spirit which God bestowed upon the Apostles and Primitive Christians, which enabled them to work miracles, and to speak Languages which they had never learnt, and to Prophecy, was a plain argument to all the World, that God now owned the Christians, not the Jews, for his chosen and elect People, for his Sons and Children : for this was the great dispute of those days, whether Jews or Christians were the

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the Sons of God, whether God now owned the Jewish or the Christian Religion, and the Apostles decide this Controversie by the Testimony of the Spirit; for God could not give a greater Testimony to the Christian Church, than the gift of the holy Spirit; for it was a plain argument that he owned them for his Sons, when he bestowed the Spirit of his Son on them: as the Apostle argues, *Gal.iii.2. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of Faith?* That is, did God bestow his Spirit on you, while ye were Jews, or upon your conversion to Christianity? For if God bestowed his Spirit only on Christians, this is a sufficient Seal to the Christian Religion.

This is very plain and intelligible; the Testimony of the Spirit assures us that all Christians are the Sons of God, and Heirs of his Promises, and every mans own Conscience will tell him, whether he be a Christian, that is, whether he heartily believe, and obey the Gospel of Christ, and herein consists our Union to Christ, and fellowship with him: let us then leave those other dim notions to men who can believe what no man can understand, who despise every thing that can be understood, as if it were no better than *Carnal Reason*.

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CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Concerning the Love of Christ to Believers.

SECT. I.

I Have now finisht the greatest part of my design, and shall discourse more briefly of what remains. Next to our *Union* with Christ, follows our *Communion* with him; for though communion and fellowship in the Scripture notion of those words signifie no more than what we call Union, as* I have already proved, yet in these mens Divinity they are very different: our *Union* to Christ is represented by our *Marriage* to him, our *Communion* with him by *consequential, conjugal affections*: the only thing I shall at present take notice of for a conclusion of all is, that mutual and reciprocal love, which is betwixt Christ and Believers, *Christs love to Believers, and the Believers love to Christ.*

First, *Christs love to Believers*; the Scripture doth very justly magnifie the *Love of Christ*, as the greatest example of Goodness that was ever known in the World; and the greatest expression of the Love of Christ was his *dying for us*: *He is that good Shepherd who giveth his life for his Sheep*, John 10. 11. and our Saviour himself tells us, *greater love hath no man than this, that a*
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* Chap. 4.
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man lay down his life for his friend : and therefore when the Apostle designed to mention the greatest expression of Christs Love, he instances in this, Eph. 5. 25. Husbands love your Wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it : and when the same Apostle represents the constraining power of Christs love to captivate our affections, and to engage us to live to him, he argues from his love in dying for us, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. For the Love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judg, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again: and the most surprizing circumstance of all, which gives a new lustre to the Love of Christ, is that he died for us while we were Enemies, Rom. 5. 6, 7, 8. For when we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly, for scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die, but God commendeth his Love towards us, that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us.

But though this be the greatest, it is not the only expression of Christs Love; herein indeed was the Love of Christ perfected that he died for us, but he expresses the same good will in all the methods of his Grace and Providence: for Christ being our Lord and Master, the most proper expression of his Love to us is in an easy and gentle Government, and a kind and watchful Providence, not in such a fondness of passion, as is sometimes seen among equals: this

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his being a *Shepherd, a Husband, a Head, a Friend*: and our Saviour assures us, *that his yoke is easie and his burden light*, that he is a mild and gentle Governour, *meek and lowly in mind*: that he hath declared to us the secrets of Gods Counsel concerning our Salvation with the same freedom and plainness, that a man useth to his friend; *henceforth I call you not Servants for the Servant knoweth not what his Lord doth,, but I have called you Friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you*, John 15. 15. He pities our weakness and infirmities, and is ready to help and succour us; he is now ascended up into Heaven, where he personally intercedes for us, and with his own hand dispenses all those Blessings to us, which we want and pray for in his name; *he is a gracious and merciful High-Priest, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, being in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin*, Hebr. 4. 15.

And now it is no wonder if he, who died, and who intercedes for us, take pleasure in good men, and dwell with them, as one friend dwells with another. John 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest my self unto him*: and in Ver. 23. *If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*: That is, Christ will in a more peculiar manner be present with such good men, who are careful in all things to obey him, and will

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will give very sensible demonstrations of his presence with them: not that he will make any new revelations to them, for he hath already revealed the whole mind and will of God in such a plain and familiar manner, that every one may understand it, who will but exercise the same reason in it, that he does to understand the Laws of his Prince; but yet when a Soul is transformed into the likeness and image of Christ, it many times feels such strong and vigorous motions to that which is good, and such great and ravishing delights in all the acts of Religion, as infinitely excel all the pleasures of sense, and are a plain demonstration of a more peculiar presence of God in such a Soul; these divine joys are by the Psalmist compared to the Feasts upon Sacrifices, *Psam 36. 8. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy House, and thou shalt make them drink of the Rivers of thy pleasures*, that is, they shall relish as great pleasure and satisfaction in the sense of thy goodness, and in paying their just praises and acknowledgments to thee, as those do, who feast upon the Sacrifices which are offered in the Temple: for it is very reasonable to think, that a Soul, which is made one with God by a participation of his nature, should feel such divine impressions from God, as may both quicken its motions, and sweeten its work: there is a secret sympathy between things which are alike, two unisons will move when either of them is toucht, and two Souls which are of the same make, and united by a strong and intimate friendship, do many times feel each others passions at a distance, by a secret

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and unaccountable power of nature ; and can we think then, but that a Soul which heartily loves God, and passionately breaths after a greater likeness to him, and fuller enjoyment of him, must needs sometimes feel such divine touches and impressions as are the effects (if I may so speak) of a mutual love and sympathy of natures : some such thing our Saviour hath promised , and good men experience, not in equal degrees indeed, nor equally at all times, but in proportion to their attainments in true piety and vertue, and to the present frame and disposition of their own minds.

This is a short and true account of the *Love of Christ* , which deserves for ever to be admired and adored ; and it must needs be a very hearty trouble to all good men to see so great and so generous a love so miserably abused and misrepresented by childish and Romantick descriptions : too many there are, who cloath our Saviour with all the passions and follies of mortal men , and think they honour him very much, the more extravagant they make him in his love : It were easie to expatiate in this argument, and to give such a character of the Love of Christ, as I believe these very men will think prophane, when they find it in any Books, but their own ; and possibly it might do good service to Religion, and tend much to the honour of our Lord and Master to put them out of conceit with it ; but I fear the Reader would think me prophane in doing it, though in their own words, and therefore I shall chuse rather only to take notice of two things, which these men much insist on in their

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First then, the Love of Christ is a Love to the *Person* of a Believer, without considering any other *qualifications*, than that he is *such an individual Person*; that is, the excellency of Christs Love consists in this, that he loves for no reason; now I confess this is a *wonderful Love*, but wherein the excellency of it consists, I cannot see; I am sure we account that man a Fool, who loves at this rate; we, who are reasonable Creatures, think that we are bound to govern all our actions and the passions of our mind too by reason, and we account it a reproach to a man to act either against reason or without it, to do any thing of which he cannot give a reasonable account; and how that should come to be the perfection of the Love of God, which is a reproach to men, is above my apprehension. Indeed were this true, it would undermine the very foundations of Religion; for the great end of Religion is to please God, and to procure his love and favour, but if God and Christ love for no reason, then it is a vain thing for us to think of pleasing God, or procuring his love by any thing we can do: whether we obey him, or disobey him, it is all one as to this Case; for if he please to love us without any reason, our sins cannot hinder it, and if it does not please him to love us, our Holiness and Obedience cannot alter him: when our acceptation with God depends wholly upon a Sovereign and unaccountable will, nothing we can do can either hinder or promote it, and therefore all Religion is in vain.

The foundation of this mistake is a Philosophical nicety that God must act wholly from himself; and therefore must not be moved by any external cause, whereas should he love us because we are holy and obedient to him, or hate us, because we are wicked, his love and hatred would depend upon an external cause, *viz.* the holiness or wickedness of Creatures, which unbecomes an *Independant being* to depend upon any thing else: the sum of which reasoning is this, that because God is the first cause of all things, on whom all other things depend, and he on nothing, therefore he must love and hate his Creatures without any reason but his own unaccountable will: for this is all the inconvenience they can object, that when God loves or hates, rewards or punishes his Creatures, the reason of this difference, he makes between his Creatures must be fetcht from the persons themselves, whom he thus loves or hates; and so it must of necessity be, if he have any reason at all; for the reason of love or hatred ought to be in the object, not in the person who loves or hates: and yet in propriety of speech God cannot be said to depend on his Creatures or any thing without himself for the reason of his love or hatred, but his own nature is the reason of it: he is infinitely holy, and therefore loves holiness and hates sin, and his natural love to holiness is the reason why he loves holy men, and his natural hatred to sin is the reason why he hates wicked men; his own holiness is the reason why he loves holy men, but the holiness of a Creature is the reason why he determines his love to any

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 particular person, and if they depend on Creatures, we must God does thus depend on his administration of his Providences of Rewards and Punishments should not be wise, and holy if he did not, that is, if the difference between things natures require. It is a *Independant Being*, that he reason for what he does by will, which is so far from that it destroys all the other divine nature.

Secondly, These men of Christ is immutable, the love upon us though we can never alter: that is from the Love of Christ; that was the ground of so there is nothing that thoughts of his love, where (though this is no certainty he who loves for no reason for none) if sin fore-see him from planting his seed that is sin committed thoughts of his heart, where this is a strong and firm in it self cannot alter, but we it is, let any man judge us the depth of Christs love, that whereas his holy Spirit burden, an abomination.

particular person, and if they will call this a depending on Creatures, we must acknowledg that God does thus depend on his Creatures in the administration of his Providence, in the distributions of Rewards and Punishments, and he should not be wise, and holy, and just, and good, if he did not, that is, if he did not put such a difference between things and persons, as their natures require. It is a strange notion of an *Independant Being*, that he must have no other reason for what he does but his own arbitrary will; which is so far from being a perfection, that it destroys all the other perfections of the divine nature.

Secondly, These men tell us too, that *the love of Christ is immutable*, that having once fixt his love upon us though without any reason, he can never alter: that *sin it self cannot separate us from the Love of Christ; as there was nothing in us, that was the ground of his planting his love on us, so there is nothing that shall be able to overturn the thoughts of his love, when once they are fixt on us:* (though this is no certain demonstration, for he who loves for no reason may give over loving for none) *if sin fore-seen were not able to hinder him from planting his heart on us, how then shall it (that is sin committed) be able to overturn the thoughts of his heart, when once they are fixed on us?* this is a strong and fixed love indeed, which sin it self cannot alter, but how wise and holy a love it is, let any man judg: herein * Dr. Owen tells us *the depth of Christs love is to be contemplated, that whereas his holy Soul hates every sin, it is a burden, an abomination, a new wound to him,* and

* Commun.
p. 158.

and his poor Spouse, that is sinful Believers are full of sin, failings, infirmities, he hides all, covers all, bears with all, rather than he will lose them. He adds indeed, by his power preserving them from such sins, as a remedy is not provided for in the Covenant of Grace: I suppose he means the sin against the Holy Ghost, for there is a remedy provided for all other sins in the Covenant of Grace: and all other sins a Believer it seems may be guilty of, and Christ will hide all, cover all, rather than lose him: now this is as down right Antinomianism, as ever Dr. Crisp or Saltmarsh vented: There have been and are to this day a great many wise and learned men, who contend earnestly for the *perseverance of the Saints*, that those who are once in a *state of Grace*, shall always continue so, but then they found this not on such an immutable love, as sin it self cannot alter, for this is not reconcileable with the Holiness of the divine nature, nor with those threatnings in the Scripture against such back-sliders; *when the righteous man turneth away from his Righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that a wicked man doth, shall he live? all the Righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Ezek. 18. 24. And if any man turn back my Soul shall have no pleasure in him*: which is a plain demonstration, the truth of which is acknowledged by all sober Writers, that if such men can be supposed to relapse into a sinful state, God also will cease to love them; and therefore they found the *immutability* of Gods love to them,

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them, on *their perseverance in doing good* : God loves all good men, but if they cease to be good, he also must cease to love : and herein the *immutability* and *unchangeableness* of Gods love consists, not that he always loves the *same Person* , but that he always loves for the *same Reason* : for it is no perfection to be so fixt in our kindness, that where we love once, we will always love, whatever reason there may be to alter our affection; for by this means we may love undeserving objects, which is the greatest degeneracy of love : but the perfection of love consists in loving deserving objects , and in loving upon honourable reasons, and the immutability of love consists in loving always for the same reason, w^{ch} is the only foundation of a *vertuous immutability*.

The reason of Christs love to any Person is his Holiness and Obedience : *if any man love me he will keep my words , and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. Joh. 14. 23.* and the unchangeableness of his love is seen in this, that he will continue to love , while we continue to obey him : *if ye shall keep my Commandments, that is, continue to do so, ye shall abide in my love, I will continue to love you , as I have kept my Fathers Commandments, and abide in his love, Joh. 15. 10.*

This is the immutability of the divine nature, that God always acts upon steady and constant principles, that whatever changes there are in the World , which may occasion very different administrations in his providence, yet he is the same still, and never changes ; whereas should God always love the *same Person*, however he changed

changed and alter'd, God must change and alter too, because though he still loves the same Person, yet he must love for different or contrary reasons, or for none at all ; and that is the much greater change of the two, to alter the reason, than the object of love : if God love a good man, because he is good, and continue to love him when he is wicked, his love is a mutable thing, which can love goodness or wickedness, which can love for none, or for contrary reasons ; but if God always love true goodness, and good men, and never loves any other, whatever change there be in Creatures, God is the same still, and unchangeable in his love.

Thus you see, while these men pretend to admire and magnifie the love of God and Christ, they make it a despicable and worthless thing, such as a wise man would be ashamed of, and such as a good man cannot be guilty of, to love for no reason, and to continue to love contrary to reason : And as this is a great reproach to God and to our Saviour, so is it a great injury to men too ; for it must of necessity make them careless of pleasing God, and secure in their sins, when they are perswaded that sin cannot hinder God from loving them, nor alter his love towards them : that if ever he love them, it is for no reason but because he will, and when once he is resolved upon it, the immutability of his nature makes it necessary for him to continue to love : that now sin it self cannot separate us from the love of God : if this were true, the worst man living would have as much reason to be secure of Gods love, as the best men have ;

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SECT II.

Concerning the Believers love

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may, if the depth, and mystery, and glory of the love of Christ consists in loving for no reason, or contrary to reason, the worse men are, the fitter objects are they of the love of Christ.

S E C T II.

Concerning the Believers love to Christ.

HAVING shewed you wherein the Love of Christ consists, I shall now consider, what are those returns of love which we owe to our Lord and Saviour: I take it for granted, that all men who believe that Christ came into the world to save sinners, are of the Apostles mind, *if any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema Maranatha*; the only dispute is, how we are to express our Love to Christ: now love primarily signifies the inward affection of the mind, but is made visible by outward actions: as for the affection of the mind, we must consider, that Christ is our Superiour, our Lord and Master, and therefore our love to Christ ought not to express it self in a fond and familiar passion, such as we have for our friends and equals, but in a great reverence and devotion: Superiours must be treated with honour and respect, which requires that we keep our distance; and therefore our love to our Parents and Superiours is called *honour* in the fifth Commandment, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*, and the same religious affection to God which is sometimes called *love*, is at other times called *fear*, which signifies a re-
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verential love, or a love of honour, and reverence, and devotion: which includes a great delight in the thoughts of God, a devout sense of his Greatness and Majesty, a great admiration of his Excellencies and Perfections, a religious awe and reverence for him, and all those affections of the Soul, which are expressive of Love and Honour.

As for the external expressions of our love, they are as various as the expressions of honour are: and herein we must have a peculiar regard to the nature and condition of the Person, and that relation we stand in to him: thus Christ being *the only begotten Son of God*, we must have regard to the greatness and excellency of his *Person*, that our returns may bear some proportion to it; Christ having condescended to come into the World in our nature, to suffer and die for us, it becomes us to admire his love and goodness, to extol and praise him; to celebrate the memorials of his Death and Passion in that holy Feast, which he hath on purpose instituted to be a thankful remembrance of our crucified Lord: since he is our Mediator and Advocate, the truest expression of our love and honour is to confide and trust in him, to depend on his intercession for us, to offer up all our Prayers to God in his name, and to expect an answer to our Prayers for his sake: and when we consider him as our Prophet and Law-giver, we must express our love to him in a steadfast belief of his Gospel, and in a sincere and hearty obedience to all his Laws: love to equals, who have no Authority over each other, but what love gives them, makes

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makes them very flexible and obsequious to each others desires and requests; but our love to Superiours, to our Prince or Parents includes obedience in its own nature; and therefore this our Saviour makes the principal tryal of our love to him; *If you love me keep my Commandments: and he that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: but he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings; you are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you,* Joh. 14. 15, 23, 24, and in chap. 15. vers. 14. for there cannot be a more proper expression of our love and honour to a Law-giver, than to obey his Laws. And when we consider our Saviour as *our Guide and Example*, the truest expression of our love and honour is *to imitate him, to live as he lived in the World*: For there is nothing more natural than to imitate what we love and reverence, which is the plainest demonstration of the greatest honour, in that we think it our perfection and happiness to be like our Saviour.

And that which perfects our Love is an undaunted courage and resolution in professing the Faith of Christ, whatever dangers and miseries it may expose us to in this World; as St. John tells us, *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear,* 1 Joh. 5. 18. when we can *hate Father and Mother, Wife and Children, Brethren and Sisters for the sake of Christ, and sacrifice our lives also for him rather than abjure his Gospel or violate his Laws*. These are the proper expressions of our love to Christ, which are summarily comprehended in believing his Gospel, and obeying it; for to be a true Lover of Christ signifies

nifies neither more nor less than to be a good Christian, one who diligently obeys all the Laws of the Gospel.

This is a short account of the Nature of our Love to Christ, which deserves a larger Discourse; But I am now hastening to a conclusion, and what I have already said, is so plain and easie, that it may be understood without a larger explication. Our love to Christ is not such a subtil, airy, and metaphysical notion, as some men represent it to be, but is a vital Principle of Action, which governs our lives, and makes us fruitful in good works: And indeed of all mistakes there is none more fatal and dangerous than to mistake the nature of our love to Christ, because this is a practical Errour, which hath an immediate influence upon our lives, and one mistake in the Principles or Rules of Action is of greater consequence than a great many false Opinions, which end in speculation: And therefore for a conclusion of all, I shall briefly take notice of those mistakes some men have been guilty of concerning the nature and expressions of our Love to Christ.

And first, as they tell us, that Christ falls in love with *our Persons*, without considering any qualifications in us, which may make us fit objects of his love, so in requital to him, we must love *the Person of Christ*. This I confess is as certain and evident as any demonstration in *Euclide*, that if we love Christ, we must love his *Person*, for the Person of Christ is Christ himself, and if we love Christ, we must love him, and if they would be satisfied with this, the dispute

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dispute would be at an end; but this will not serve their turn, and therefore we must examine what they mean by loving the *Person* of Christ: Now they oppose our love to the *Person* of Christ to our love to him *upon account of his benefits, to our love to our selves, and to our duties.*

First, we must love the *Person* of Christ in opposition to his benefits, that is, we must not consider what advantages we do or may receive from Christ, what he hath done or suffered for us, but we must love his *Person* purely for himself without any other considerations to endear him to us: This matter is very gravely stated and determined by * *W. B.* who tells us, 1. *W. B.* *That it is a good and lawful thing to love Christ* *Christ's* *in reference to his benefits.* This is a very liberal grant, that gratitude which hath hitherto *Personal excellency the object of our love* been accounted a great and excellent vertue, is now owned to be a lawful thing. 2. *It is our* *P. 15.* *duty to love Christ's Person, to have our hearts drawn out with love to the very Person of Christ.* This is so certainly true, that even those men, who love Christ for his benefits, love his *Person*. But 3. *The excellency of Christ's Person is not the object of my Faith, but Christ crucified.* 4. *Though Christ crucified be the object of my Faith yet the personal excellencies of Christ are the object of my Love: yea it is a more excellent thing yet to love the Person of Christ, than the benefits of Christ, a more excellent thing to have my heart drawn out in love to the Person of Christ, than to have my heart drawn out in love to him for his benefits.* Now what can be the meaning of all this, but that

the excellency and perfection of our love to Christ consists in loving him for no reason; the proper object and reason of love is *Goodness*; to love that which is good for nothing is the folly and degeneracy of love, and it is as foolish and impossible a task to love a Person, who hath been good to us, not because he hath been good, but for no reason: Now this is the case here, for if you separate the Person and Personal Excellencies of Christ from the consideration of his Benefits, his personal Goodness from the expressions of his Love and Goodness to our selves and others, it can be no object nor reason of our Love; for a Goodness which doth no good, or never did any, or which is all one, is considered as doing none, is so far from being the object of our love, that it is not the object of our understanding; for we cannot understand what that goodness means, which never did any good. God challenges our love not upon account of an imaginary goodness of Nature, which never did any good, but for the real and sensible effects of his goodness in the works of Creation and Providence, and the Redemption of Mankind by our Lord Jesus Christ; and Christ himself challenges our love for the like reasons, because he hath loved us, and dyed for us, and now intercedes for us, and will at the last day bestow a Crown of Glory and Immortality on us, but never, as I can observe, requires such an abstracted and metaphysical love to his Person, without any respect to his benefits.

Indeed these men seem not to understand themselves, when they oppose our love to the
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Person of Christ to our love to him upon account of his benefits; for when you inquire what this Person of Christ is, which is the object of our Love, then they describe his beauty and perfections, *the comeliness of his Person, the sweetness of his disposition, his great riches, that he is a good sutable to all our wants*, that in him we shall find whatever we need, *if you be poor he is rich; if you be foolish, he is wise; if you be out of the way, I am the way, saith he; if you want a Director in the way, I am the Truth; if you be in the dark, I am Light; if you be wicked and sinful, he is Righteousness, the Lord our Righteousness.* Now either all this signifies the benefits we receive by Christ, or it signifies nothing and how then do these personal Excellencies of Christ differ from his benefits? nay, when they direct us how to attain to this love to the Person of Christ, they bid us *behold how Christ hath loved us and our persons, how many impediments his love hath broken thorough, how free it is, so free that there was no reason for his love to us, neither likeness, benefit, nor love, &c.* and they teach us *to use Christ much, if we would love his person: in any good thing you have, the more you use it, the more you prize it, and the more you prize it, the more you love it; if you have a good friend, the more you use him, the more you prize him, and the more you prize him, the more you love him; if you have a good Horse, the more you use him, the more you prize him, &c. if you have a good Knife, the more you use it, &c. if you would love Christ, use him much, and then the more you will prize him, and the more you will love him.*

W.B. ibid.

Concerning the Believers love to Christ.

Now to let pass the rudeness of the Comparisons, this using Christ must signifie his benefits, and to prize and love Christ much, because we use him much, is to love him, because we make great advantage of him, and receive many benefits from him: which is neither better nor worse than to love him for his benefits.

The occasion of all this contradiction and confusion in these mens discourses is, that they do not distinguish between loving the benefit, and loving the person upon account of his benefits: It must indeed be acknowledged to be very brutish and barbarous to delight in the Gift, and to take no notice of the Giver, to solace ourselves in the effects of the divine bounty and goodness, and to make no returns of love and thankfulness and duty to God: this is to love the benefit, but not the person who bestows this benefit: but those blessings and benefits we receive from God and Christ are the true reasons, why we are bound to love them; and could we be supposed to love God and Christ for no reason, or, as these men phrase it, purely for themselves, without respect to those many blessings we have received from them, it would not be accepted, because this is not a reasonable love, but an unaccountable and foolish passion.

All the expressions of our love to God and Christ are originally founded on gratitude, because God loved us first, and our love is only a return of his; now thankfulness and gratitude includes a necessary respect to those blessings and benefits we have received: it is peculiar to God, who wants nothing, and can receive nothing

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thing from his Creatures, to love without any respect to benefits, but the love of indigent and dependent Creatures is a love of thankfulness, is a grateful acknowledgment of those many blessings we receive from God.

Secondly, These men oppose our love to the person of Christ, to our love to our selves: the first destroys the reason and the object of our love, and this destroys the principle of it; it is made the Character of a wicked man, who wants an inward principle of love to God and Christ, that though he seeks to honour God never so much, yet all that he doth, is done out of love to himself, and therefore God abhors all that he performs. All the good things such a wicked man doth, are for himself, either for self-credit, or self-ease, or self-content, or self-safety; he sleeps, prays, hears, speaks, professeth for himself alone: hence acting always for himself, he committeth the highest degree of Idolatry --- makes himself a God, &c. Hence the same Author exhorts Sinners; away then out of your selves to the Lord Jesus --- go to him, and take hold on him, not with the hand of presumption and love to thy self, to save thy self, but with the hand of faith and love to him, to honour him: and a little after describing the easie ways to Heaven, all which lead to Hell, he reckons among the rest, the way of self-love, whereby a man fearing terribly he shall be damned, useth diligently all means, whereby he shall be saved. Here is the strongest difficulty of all, to row against the stream, to hate a mans self (our own Souls and eternal Salvation) and then to follow Christ fully: now is not this a hard case, that before we can love God and Christ as we

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ought, we must root out the very principle of all love; that we must learn to hate Salvation and eternal happiness, before we can close with Christ for Salvation! he might well say, that this is the strongest difficulty of all, for indeed it is impossible: love to our selves is the foundation of our love to all other things, even to God himself; he that does not love himself, will love nothing else; he that hates himself and his own Soul, and despises eternal Salvation, will not care for Christ, nor Salvation by him: all the motives and arguments of the Gospel to perswade us to love, and fear, and obey God, are founded on self-love; for how is it possible, that we should be affected with a due sense of Gods goodness to us? that we should be excited and quickned by the hopes of such great rewards? that we should be restrained and governed by the fears of punishment? if we did not love our selves, if we did not care what became of us, whether we were happy or miserable for ever.

It is a vain thing to perswade a man not to love himself, for this is as natural and necessary, as it is for the fire to burn, or Sun to shine, it is not matter of our choice, it is not in our power to do otherwise; and all that such discourses as these can do, is either to make men Hypocrites, to pretend to do that which they cannot do; or to make honest men, who cannot thus cheat and delude themselves, despair of their Salvation, because they cannot find themselves contented without Salvation, that Christ without Comfort and without Salvation cannot satisfy them.

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Concerning the Believers love to Christ.
It is true, when men are to God, when self-love is by God, to despise his Faith and Religion, and mistaken self-love themselves nor God is our interest as which men are Idolaters because they set up a position to him; but self-love teaches us to submit our selves to do, as we ought to separate our love to ourselves, from the carnal Salvation, do plainly understand the nature of Christ.

Thirdly, They our own duties, to Christ to the mission of our love to us the chastity of our you know is a great thing (as our affections and efforts, for which we be torbid, that any Christ righteousness and ators and Advocates past sins, nor merit hath done: what it is only this, that effects of Christ in

It is true, when men set up self in opposition to God, when self-love tempts them to disobey God, to despise his Counsels, to renounce their Faith and Religion, this is a very vicious and mistaken self-love, such men neither love themselves nor God in a proper sense, because it is our interest as well as duty to obey God: such men are Idolaters, as our Author speaks, because they set up self above God, and in opposition to him; but when our love to our selves teaches us to love God, and in all things to submit our selves to his will and pleasure, we do, as we ought to do; and they who separate our love to God from our Love to our selves, from the care of our own happiness and Salvation, do plainly declare, that they neither understand the nature of man, nor the Gospel of Christ.

Thirdly, They oppose our love to Christ to our own duties, that is, they oppose our love to Christ to the most proper and natural expression of our love to him: herein Dr. Owen places the *chastity of our affections to Christ*, (which you know is a great marriage duty) *in not taking any thing (as our own Righteousness) into our affections and esteem for those ends and purposes, for which we have received Christ*: and God forbid, that any Christian should; for our own righteousness and duties cannot be our Mediators and Advocates, cannot expiate for our past sins, nor merit Heaven for us, which Christ hath done: what then is the difference? why it is only this, that the Dr. places the Righteousness of Christ in the room of our Righteousness

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on p. 165.

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ness, to be not only the foundation, but the condition of the Covenant of Grace, and then makes it an expression of our chaste affections to Christ, quite to thrust out our own righteousness and to allow it no place in our Religion: he first makes Christ all to us, (more then ever Christ intended to make himself) and leaves no room for any thing else, and then warns us upon our vow of Chastity not to take any thing into Christs place; whereas, as he has ordered the matter, we must take our own righteousness into Christs place, or else cast it quite away, for there is no other place left for it: what he alledges for this, I have sufficiently considered already, and shall not now repeat it; but is it not very strange, that when our Saviour hath made our obedience the great and principal expression of our love to him, these men should make such a competition between our love to Christ, and our obedience? should put such jealousies into peoples heads, what great danger there is of their own duties and righteousness, lest they should prove like foolish lovers, who when they are to wooe for the Lady, fall in love with the Handmaid that is only to lead them to her: So men fall in love with and dote upon their own duties, and rest contented with the naked performance of them (that is, with doing good) which are only Handmaids to lead the Soul to the Lord Jesus Christ: is not this the ready way to perswade people, that our love to Christ consists in something more refined and spiritual than obedience? which will quickly teach them to love Christ without obeying him, and not

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run the hazzard of doting and resting on duties. No man that understands the Gospel of Christ, can think that his own righteousness and obedience can merit Heaven; when we have done the best we can, we must acknowledg our selves to be unprofitable Servants, who have done but our duty; and must ascribe the praise and glory of all to the Grace of God in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, who pardons our past sins, and our present infirmities, and bestows such great rewards on us, as we could never deserve; and if this will not preserve us from doting and resting on duties, there is no other remedy, but to let them quite alone, since it is so dangerous to meddle wth them: and yet if we believe Mr. Shephard this will not secure us; for *it is one thing to trust to be saved by duties, another thing to rest in duties; a man trusts unto them, when he is of this opinion, that only good duties can save him; a man rests in duties, when he is of this opinion, that only Christ can save him, but in his practice he goes about to save himself: that is, does all the good he can, with as much vigour and earnestness as if we were to merit Heaven by it, and then thinks to make amends for this ungodly resting in duties by acknowledging, when he hath done all, that he is an unprofitable servant.* But the mystery of this will appear more in what follows.

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Thus you see what the object of the Saints love is, *the very person of Christ, in opposition to his benefits, in opposition to self-love, in opposition to duties:* let us now inquire, Secondly, How they express their love to the person of Christ, and

J.O.Com.
P. 63.

Ibid.
p. 154.

Pag. 140.

** Ch. 4.*
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and that consists in preferring Christ above all, in admiring his beauty and excellencies and perfections; *the Soul takes a view of all that is in the World, the lusts of the flesh, &c. and sees it all to be vanity. --- It views also legal righteousness, blamelesness before men, uprightness of conversation, duties upon conviction, and counts them all to be loss for the excellency of the knowledg of Christ. --- Beloved peace, beloved natural relations, beloved wisdom and learning, beloved righteousness, duties, all loss compared with Christ. * They value him above all other things and persons; they value him above their lives; they value him above all spiritual excellencies, and all other righteousness whatever. * He is their joy, their Crown, their rejoycing, their life, food, health, strength, desire, righteousness, Salvation, blessedness: now who can desire more than this? and yet if we examine the meaning of it, it will appear to be a mistaken and useless passion, such as our Saviour will not approve, nor accept: I have * already shewed you what these men mean by the person and personal excellencies of Christ, that whatever is spoken of Christ, whether in respect of his Gospel and Revelations, or his propitiation and Sacrifice, or his mediation and intercession for us, these men convert into personal Graces; his personal fulness, and righteousness, and wisdom, &c. which we must immediately derive from the person of Christ; and this is the person of Christ, which these men, so much admire, and prize, and value, above all other things in the World, a Person in whom there is all fulness, righteousness, life, power, beauty, and every thing that a Sinner*

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ner wants; this is the person whom they prefer before all legal righteousness, spiritual excellencies, duties, obedience, before the love of God himself, which is by these men accounted no better than a legal righteousness; the meaning of all which is, that they prefer the person of Christ, which hath such a perfect righteousness for them, and will save them without requiring any legal conditions of them, infinitely before the Religion and Gospel of Christ, before obedience to his commands, before the love and fear of God: so that the foundation of their love to Christ is a fond imagination, that he will save them by his righteousness without any righteousness and holiness of their own; this makes them so fond of the person of Christ, to call him their joy, and their Crown, their life, food, health, strength, righteousness, because they look upon him as a refuge and sanctuary for the wicked and ungodly, where the greatest, the oldest, the stubbornest transgressor may shelter himself from the wrath of God; and I have some reason to think, that Christ will not much prize and value such devoto's as these, nor their obsequious flatteries or praise.

And yet herein the devotion of these men consists, in admiring, prizing, valuing the person of Christ: this is that * Evangelical Righteousness, we must gain by duties, more prizing of acquaintance with, desire after, loving and delighting in Union with the Lord Jesus Christ; a moral man who rests in duties (that is, who does what God commands him, and expects to be saved by Christ) may grow in legal righteousness, that

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that is in true holiness and piety, but this will not avail, unless we grow in this *Evangelical Righteousness*: *this is the great end of duties to carry us to the Lord Jesus Christ the only Saviour*: hear a Sermon to carry thee to Jesus Christ: fast and pray, and get a full tide of affections in them to carry thee to the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, to get more love of him, more acquaintance with him, more union with him: so sorrow for thy sins, that thou maist be more fitted for Christ, that thou maist prize Christ the more: use thy duties as Noahs Dove did her Wings, to carry thee to the Ark of the Lord Jesus Christ: --- Or as it is with a poor man, that is to go over a great water for a treasure on the other side, though he cannot fetch the Boat, he calls for it, and though there be no treasure in the Boat, yet he useth the Boat to carry him over to the treasure: so Christ is in Heaven, and thou on Earth, he doth not come to thee, and thou canst not go to him, now call for a Boat: though there is no grace, no good, no salvation, in a pithless duty, yet use it to carry thee over to the treasure, the Lord Jesus Christ. When thou comest to hear, say, Have over Lord by this Sermon, when thou comest to pray, say, Have over Lord by this Prayer to a Saviour, &c. So that it seems, the whole business of our love to Christ and Evangelical Righteousness consists in some flights of fancy and imagination, in admiring and valuing the person of Jesus Christ, in getting an acquaintance with him, and Union to him; and the business of all Religion is to have over to Christ, that we may love and prize his person and personal Righteousness above all things in the world: It is not so much
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the business of Sermons to acquaint us with the nature and attributes, works and providences of God, and to instruct us in our duty to him, and to encourage us to the practice of it by all the motives and arguments of the Gospel, *as to have over to Christ*, to acquaint us with his fulness, and Righteousness, and allsufficiency to save us without such a legal Righteousness of our own: the design of Prayer is not so much to affect our Souls with a sense of the divine Majesty and Greatness, to worship and adore the great Creator of the World, and to express our trust and affiance in him; *as to have over to Christ*, to fetch pardon, and life, and health, and Righteousness from him: that sorrow for sin is not so much to imbitter sin to us, and to confirm and strengthen our resolutions against it, as to teach us to prize and value the person of Christ more who is our Righteousness: in a word, the nature and design of Religion is now changed from being the homage and worship of God, the certain means of pleasing him, and transforming us into his nature and likeness, which is the natural end of Religion, into a *Cock-Boat, or Skuller*, to *wast us over to Christ*.

Here we see the true reason, why these men do so much despise morality in comparison with those Gospel duties of hearing Sermons, and Prayer, and Confession, and Humiliation, and Fasting, &c. Because as they handle the matter, the practice of moral vertues cannot *have us over to Christ*, cannot apply the Righteousness and fulness of Christ to us, nor ravish our fancies with glorious images and ideas of his Person; and

and since all the duties of Religion are such *pithless* things, *which have no grace, no good, no Salvation*, in them, but as they *have us over to Christ*, *poor morality* must needs be a worthless thing.

Thus I have finisht my designed task, and upon a review of it, it makes me amazed to think, how strangely these men have transformed the Religion of our Saviour, and disfigured the Gospel of Christ; how they have undermined the fundamental design of the Gospel, which is to make men good and vertuous, and like to God: how they have misrepresented the ends of Christ coming into the World, and abused his Expiation and Sacrifice, and Righteousness, and Intercession to the Patronage of Vice and Wickedness; how they have laid snares to betray some men to a licentious life, and to entangle others in endless troubles and perplexities of mind: how under a pretence of advancing the person of Christ, they have in effect through ignorance, and mistake, and want of consideration (for I am not willing to suspect any worse cause) banisht his Religion out of the World: I have faithfully and impartially stated the case, examined their proofs from Scripture and reason, and the result of all is no more but this, that the only way to please God and to save our Souls, is, to obey the Precepts of the Gospel, trusting in the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who having *perfected* the work of our Redemption, *is become the Author of Eternal Salvation to all them that obey him.*

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